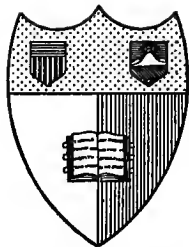




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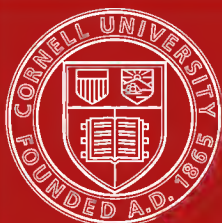
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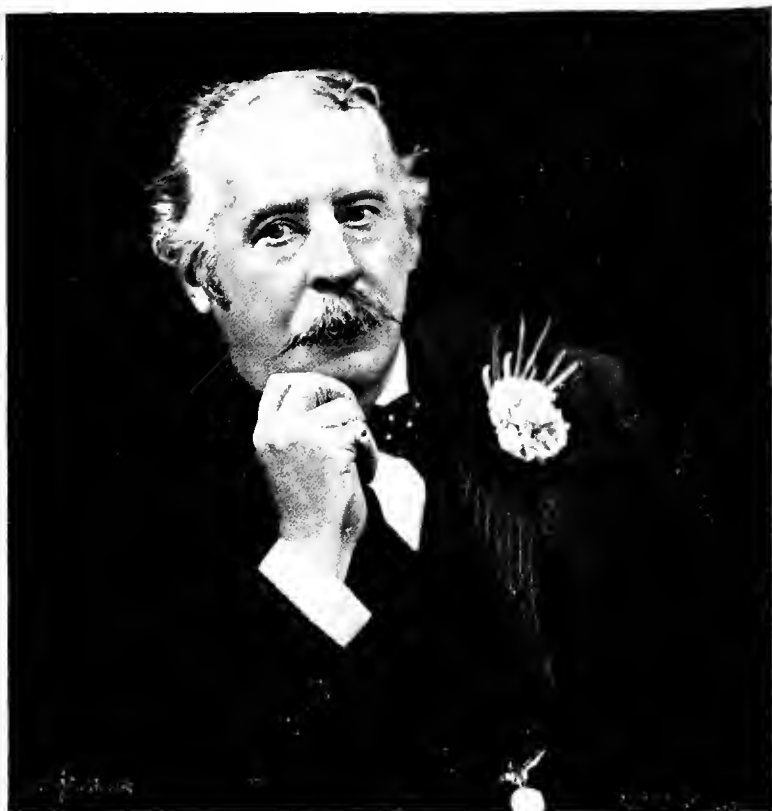
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OLD DAYS IN BOHEMIAN LONDON



[Scotty 1900]

[Barnett.]

Your Clement Scott

CLEMENT SCOTT.

[Frontispiece.]

OLD DAYS IN BOHEMIAN LONDON

(Recollections of Clement Scott)

BY
Mrs. CLEMENT SCOTT

With 16 Illustrations on Art Paper

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
:: :: PATERNOSTER ROW :: ::

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NOTE.—As I have not been able to trace the origin of some of these portraits, it has been impossible to make the usual acknowledgments in every case.

M.C.S.

DEDICATION

As I have found no friend wide-minded enough with whom I can be either as bad as I am, or as good as I'd like to be—I dedicate this book to those who don't know me, hoping they may understand me better than many who think they do.

MARGARET CLEMENT SCOTT.

In order to facilitate other Subscribers getting this Book without undue delay, it is respectfully requested that it may be returned to the Library as soon as read.

ON

CHAPTER I

CLEMENT SCOTT

"PLEASURE HOUSES—Give me pleasure houses for the people, not morgues, or dissecting rooms, or doctors' laboratories, or places where unhealthy, morbid subjects are introduced, or hereditary disease is openly discussed, and all that is lovely in form, colour, art, and expression is distorted. Give me pleasure houses for the people to enjoy good, wholesome, human plays, and fine, stirring dramas."

THIS eternal "cry of the heart" could be heard distinctly in every notice Clement Scott ever wrote of the theatre. His love and passionate worship for the stage was indeed so powerful that he compelled attention whenever he wrote about it, and created an enthusiasm which became not only contagious, but infectious—and his following grew, and grew and grew, until he absolutely voiced public opinion as regards things theatrical.

I don't want to speak of him as if he were a theatrical Pope, and consequently infallible—but his notices of new productions were so definite, so convincing, so boldly stated, so fearless and incisive, so analytical and accurately estimated, that they read as if he had put himself in the position of plaintiff, counsel for the defence and judge, too.

His "summing up" was absolutely remarkable. He weighed this side and the other, he gave his reasons why, and why not, and after thoroughly probing into the minutest detail pronounced sentence accordingly, and

nine hundred and ninety times out of every thousand his "followers" declared his judgment to be *theirs*.

I don't suppose anyone except "the man in the know" can possibly realize with what desperateness and earnestness Clement Scott fought single-handed to attain the present—and I trust lasting—popularity and importance of the theatre and the theatrical profession. He raised a once despised trade to a fine art, and placed it on a singularly high platform.

His was the "vox clamantis in deserto," but still he stood there and shouted.

They tried to push him and hustle him, and thrust him aside, but he refused to budge an inch, and stuck rigidly to his guns even when dear old Mr. J. M. Levy, one of the first proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*—and grandfather of this, the second Lord Burnham—hauled him severely over the coals for writing such a mass of "effusive gush," as he called it, about an unknown actor and his play.

The unknown actor was Henry Irving. His play, "The Bells."

After that Mr. Levy gave him his head; he let him take the bit between his teeth and write at what length he pleased, until he himself became almost as sensitive as Clement Scott about the profession, and would often be really distressed if adverse criticisms had to be written.

On Sundays particularly he would read the notices before they were "set up," and frequently sent for C. S. to talk things over with him.

At any extra stinging passage he would wince as if the pain had been inflicted on him personally, and then, with one of his delightful chuckles, teeming with humour, would say :

"It's God's truth, Clement—it's God's own truth, my dear boy—but it will hurt the poor thing so—can't you—can't you tone it down?"

Clement Scott's enemies were countless, but with his back well against the wall, he launched out right and left. There wasn't one critic with him in the struggle.

Absolutely alone in it, *alone he won it*, for nobody

else cared a snap about acting *as an art*, and his contemporaries in general looked upon him as a fanatic, or a person with a bee in his bonnet.

When he had conquered and fairly gained the battle, most of them started a jealousy crusade against him. When that failed they became controversial, in order to strengthen their own reputation, for Clement Scott was a perfect demon in this direction, and invariably answered every attack, no matter from whence or whom it came.

I have no hesitation in saying that many a journalist who, during the years of Clement Scott's eventful reign, succeeded in engaging him in a "war of words," must have regretted the moment when the ink from his magic pen ceased to flow, for from that hour they faded into nebulous insignificance, and were rarely spoken of again.

Clement Scott's position on the *Daily Telegraph* varied somewhat from the rest of the staff. He never had his own private office there. Old Mr. Levy's, afterwards Edward Lawson's, room, always remained at his disposal for night notices. For *matinée* or Sunday work he preferred his study at home.

When plays finished occasionally at eleven-thirty, or eleven forty-five, or even later, as the case might be, it required pulse, and life, and energy, to sit down and pour out a boiling column—perhaps more—on to sheet after sheet of blank paper, to hear the compositors' boys, as I have heard them, pounding down the corridor to fetch the "copy" as soon as it was written—and stand waiting if there didn't happen to be a slip ready—and then not to see your "news" again until it appeared in the paper later in the morning. He never arrived back before 2 a.m.

Nobody dreamed of speaking to C. S. when he reached the *Daily Telegraph* office after a first night.

They knew quite well it would have been hopeless to try to get a word from him. His brain was choked full of his subject—he couldn't write quickly enough.

Some of the words, when they appeared on paper, were like hieroglyphics; I wonder mistakes were not

more frequent, but they were very rare until the linotype first came along—and then . . . oh, help! help! Some of the errors were positively terrible.

These meant—not words, mind you—but entire lines—lost—missing—gone—and they'd perhaps turn up irrelevantly in another article.

We used to shriek with laughter—they made reading too funny at times.

Clement Scott maintained that the journalist who couldn't write at top-speed on any occasion and in any emergency, should not represent a daily newspaper.

His "top-speed" made him fully qualified to occupy the post he did.

He'd make straight for Edward Lawson's room, throw off his Inverness, then his coat—his "Gibus" had already been disposed of—and, rolling up his shirt sleeves as if preparing for a fight—he started.

The strain was terrific while it lasted, and woe betide anyone if he were interrupted.

"Mr. Le Sage's compliments, and will you please write as little as you can, sir, as he is so cramped for space to-night," said one messenger.

"My compliments to Mr. Le Sage, and tell him to go to hell; I shall write as much as I like," came the graceful reply, which I trust did not get delivered in those elegant words. Not that I think Mr. Le Sage would have been the least bit surprised. The *really choice* language in the *D. T.* office never appeared in the paper.

The play could not have been of much importance or he would never have had that message—but Clement Scott worshipped the drama and the theatre. Talk about suffering from nostalgia—why, he became positively unbearable if he were in any town and couldn't get to a play.

He might stand the country for a few weeks during fine weather, but if the barometer pointed to rain he'd take a journey to anywhere, if there were the slightest possibility of finding a touring company at the other end of it.

And how he'd enjoy those shows! He would behave

just like a great big schoolboy over them. But how often he discovered talented actors and actresses in this manner !

Why, didn't he come back from one of these jaunts to Stratford-on-Avon, raving about Lily Brayton and Lilian Braithwaite ? So much so, that after his opinion of these two clever ladies—who had never been heard of in London before—had been seen in print by Beerbohm Tree, Her (it was still "Her" then) Majesty's actor-manager came up to the house to ask which of the "Lilies" he should engage to play to his Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.

Clement Scott never admitted anybody's devotion to the stage to be so sincere, so genuine, so passionate and so heart-whole as his own.

It didn't matter where new plays were being produced "on the road," if he heard of them he'd be there—Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or even Margate, and a friendly hint to an author now and again has more than once turned an indifferent ending into a good one, and brought about success where there might have been failure.

There are still two or three "playmakers" very much alive to-day, who could whisper to you of this truth, and might even mention their works in connection with the statement if they were disposed to do so.

I am sure they cannot have forgotten, any more than I have, *and they have a much more solid reason to remember.*

A round of suppers given to Clement Scott to celebrate his silver jubilee on the *Daily Telegraph*, resulted in some quaint doings.

At one of them the chairman, a dreadfully hen-pecked individual, and for some considerable time, an actor-manager—startled everybody at the table by declaring that he didn't know why in the name of all and everything pink he had been asked to take the chair on such an occasion, as C. S. was not by any means a friend of his—quite the contrary, he had the gravest reasons for believing him to be his worst enemy.

Their faces must have gone all shades of white, green, crimson and purple. Dead silence prevailed. Nobody

knew quite what to say. At last a weak, broken voice called in shivering accents for "Name—name—name."

The chairman assumed his most serious attitude, and replied in a deep, sepulchral tone :

"Clement Scott once had the chance to marry my wife, and didn't ask her."

No, no, no, wild horses won't induce me to divulge the name of that man—let his miserably crushed soul rest in peace ; both "pecked" and "pecker" are no more.

My sincerest gratitude always went out to managers for extending to Clement Scott the courtesy of a private box on first nights—although it created an antagonistic feeling with most of the other critics, especially the married ones—for quite apart from the fact that the incessant talk and babble in the stalls irritated and worried him, making him much more nervous than he already was, he had a most uncomfortable habit of blurting out loudly any sudden thought or inspiration regarding the play or players which would occur to him.

This might be all very well when his emotions conveyed praise—I didn't mind that in the least—but when they were precisely in the opposite direction, my sufferings were horrible, and I literally squirmed in my seat with terror.

The "under-acting" mumbling school he couldn't tolerate—it drove him wild, and prompted him to protest vigorously on one occasion.

"What are they all talking about? I can't hear a single word, and as for the poor devil in the last row of the gallery, who's paid his bob—what about him?"

"Yes—speak up, please—Clement Scott is quite right—we should like to hear the play, *you* may know what it's all about, but *we* don't."

Remarks like this called out from every part of the house, and the players had to act up and leave the "reserved force" stunt for another evening.

"Reserved force" belongs to the Clement Scott theatrical volume of inventive remarks.

But that was a sunny dream compared to a matinée at the old Princess's Theatre. Shall I ever forget it?

We happened to be sitting in one of those boxes at the back of the dress circle, watching an extraordinarily weird melodrama.

The curtain rose on the third, fourth or fifth act—it really didn't matter, the whole thing had been "shrouded in jumble" from the outset—but this disclosed a most remarkable-looking arrangement, in the shape of an inverted mushroom of colossal proportions, which whirled round and round, creaking and groaning painfully as it moved.

The colour might have been batter, or butter, whichever way the effect was most sickly.

I looked at C. S., for I felt instinctively he was spoiling for mischief.

"Great Heaven!" he roared. "What on earth is it? Is it a hasty pudding?"

At that moment the heroine, to save herself from the clutches of the villain, took a header into what the programme assured us was a seething abyss.

However, the poor girl just managed to miss the mark, and didn't quite disappear, for there, sticking up in the air, were two neat little points of two neat little shoes—whereupon Clement Scott cried out, shouting with laughter:

"No, by God, it's a pigeon pie!"

The people shrieked in unison with him, and we made a hurried exit from the theatre. What occurred afterwards we never knew, but that play was neither seen nor heard of more.

There is no contradicting the fact, Clement Scott succeeded in making himself such a personal force in theatre-land that his criticisms were acknowledged to be the only ones which could really affect—not only the careers of actors and actresses, but the box-office receipts for good or ill—and that, instantaneously.

Charley Hawtrey has told me that he and many others have often sat up all night to get the early edition of the *Telegraph*, to see what Clement Scott had said of their new play.

I can recollect one evening in particular, when, owing to the lateness of the hour, and not feeling at all well, C. S. left the theatre just before the fall of the curtain, and asked me to follow on to the office and give him the "facts of the finish."

His exodus nearly ruined that production, for everyone on the stage thought he was displeased. They forgot their words, they "fluffed" all over the place, but fortunately he had not allowed them sufficient time to do any serious damage, and his delightful critique the next day amply repaid them for the shock he had unwittingly caused to their sensibilities.

Not merely in England was Clement Scott known as the "one and only," but his unique position among English critics is proved by the fact that Francisque Sarcey, the eminent French dramatic journalist—who, by the way, never wrote a line of his opinions in his "feuilleton" until two or three days after a production—used to be called the "Clement Scott" of Paris, and in America, Willie Winter, the one time recognized leader of dramatic critics, was frequently alluded to as the "Clement Scott" of New York.

C. S. rarely made his appearance on first nights without receiving some demonstration, either kindly or adverse.

One never-to-be-forgotten warm "reception" came after H. V. Esmond—always a most popular favourite with the "Gallery First-Nighters' Club," the "Pitites," and the "Playgoers"—had produced a new work of his own manufacture at the St. James' Theatre called *Bogey*.

I don't recollect what the piece was all about, it didn't live very long, but Harry Esmond, one of the most delightful comedians on the stage at the present moment, with style, finish, charm and perfect diction, cast himself for a character utterly unsuited to him, and Clement Scott's notice did not read favourably at all. Indeed, the critic's pen had been severely pointed when he wrote it. I distinctly remember the opening words:

"Vaulting ambition! Vaulting ambition!"

How some of those criticisms would startle people now if they were to read them, *or anything like them to-day!*

A few nights later a new production came along at the old Strand Theatre, situated just where the Tube station is now.

The Mayor was the title of it—I know no more than that. We arrived, as usual, much too early; C. S. sat at the back of the box studying the programme, I took my seat quietly, and just drew the curtain slightly aside, remarking that not many people were in the stalls yet—when——

Oh, the storm that came from the gallery and the pit! They all knew he couldn't be far off, if I were there.

“BOO — BOO — BOO — BOO — BOO — BOO—
Bogey — Bogey—Bogey—Boo—Boo—BOO—BOO—BOO
—BOO—BOO——”

The din lasted fully ten minutes, and got worse when he came to the front of the box and faced the music. The orchestra attempted to drown the booing, but failed; they were determined to express their displeasure, and that is how they gave vent to it.

But whether writing of plays, players or other subjects, the Golden Thread of Humanity was firmly woven through all Clement Scott's work.

Sir John Kirk, the head of the Ragged Schools Union, and Sir Arthur Pearson, now Commander-in-Chief of the St. Dunstan's marvellous organization for our poor blinded soldier lads, could speak far better than I can of the good that Clement Scott's “pen of tears” has done for their Fresh Air Fund.

“ Temple Chambers,
“ London, E.C.
“ 7th June, 1892.

“ DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

“ A thousand thanks for your splendid Fresh Air Fund notice in the *Illustrated London News*. I read it in the train on Friday on my way home—it is a real help. I hope you are all right for Monday, the 13th,

the first day of the Fresh Air Fund. Are you game to come down with the children in the morning, or will you follow later ?

“ Sincerely yours,

“ C. ARTHUR PEARSON.”

Clement Scott went down with the little ones, and I should imagine that his description of that outing, written with such exquisite tenderness by him for the *Daily Telegraph* the next morning, went a long way to make the Fund what it is to-day.

On more than one occasion I have been down to Epping with loads of these miserable little waifs and strays, and joined Arthur Pearson in catching sticklebacks in the forest ponds, for the delighted benefit of the laughing youngsters, most of whom had never seen a green field or tree before.

Arthur Pearson's kindly eyes were not wholly “ veiled in darkness ” in those years, but he always wore large gold-rimmed glasses. After Newnes, he finally graduated for journalistic work at the *Illustrated London News* office, under the gentle tuition of Sir William Ingram.

Sir John Kirk, writing to me the other day, says :

“ I never knew a man more sympathetic with all forms of human need than Clement Scott. The memory of him lives in my heart.”

Clement Scott's “ appeals ” for Christmas hampers for the little cripples became an institution. His vivid pictures of Nazareth House, the first of which he called “ The Harbour of Refuge,” thirty years or more ago, helped largely to make this wondrous place what it now is—a veritable “ God's own Home of Charity.” It is forbidden by the Order to divulge all “ worldly ” names of the Holy Sisters who have taken vows of “ nunhood.” If some of them were mentioned, you'd be amazed.

But any pathetic incident, thrilling scene or startling episode, would stir C. S.'s fine imagination instantly, and

the result would be patriotic, dramatic or sentimental poems, which impressed people of all classes so deeply, that over and over again they have been taken bodily from *Punch*, where they originally appeared, and reprinted in their entirety in the *Times*—a flattering tribute to their merit surely !

All Clement Scott's descriptive work written for the *Daily Telegraph* makes extraordinarily beautiful reading, and in his time, during the thirty odd years of his membership, he wrote periodically as "One of a Crowd," "A Globe Trotter," "An Old Blue," "An Old Cricketer," "A Lover of Flowers," "A Special Correspondent," "An Old Sightseer," "An Old Friend," "A Holiday Maker ;" to say nothing of leader writing, Ascots, Henleys, and race meetings of all sorts and sizes. He invariably set the ball rolling for those amusing "debates" in the "Silly Season"—"What shall we do with our daughters ?" "Is Marriage a Failure ?" etc., etc. In "pen painting" murder trials he simply stood unrivalled.

One of these was described by him in such a wonderfully sensational and dramatic style, that before twelve o'clock on the same day of its publication it was being sold in penny pamphlet form all over the streets of London.

Sir Edward Clarke speaks of this record event in his memoirs, and here is a letter from him on the very murder case in question.

" Villa Beau Séjour,
" Lugano.

" DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

" Many happy returns of the 6th of October. My thoughts go back twenty-four years to the Penge case, when you and Charles Reade, and the *Daily Telegraph* and the doctors, saved the lives of four people who had been wrongfully condemned to death. I doubt not that you have done many good works since, but that is the one which lives most clearly in my memory.

" With all good wishes,

" Faithfully yours,

" EDWARD CLARKE."

In America, too, when writing for the *New York Herald*, Clement Scott created tremendous enthusiasm there with his descriptions of the now celebrated Molineux poison murder. People wrote to the editor of the paper from everywhere; one letter in particular, which I still keep, is headed:

“CLEAN CUT DESCRIPTION.”

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘HERALD,’

“Allow me to thank you again and again for the extraordinary articles by Mr. Clement Scott on the Molineux murder case. It is indeed a rarity to read dramatic writing of this kind, so fraught with comparison, vivid clean-cut description and power. Clement Scott is a genius, and I thank you once more for the articles he has contributed to your great daily journal.

“Faithfully yours,

“TURNER WILLIAMS.”

“Long Island City, L. I.”

While on the subject of murders, let me tell you of a strange thing that happened to George du Maurier in connection with a celebrated murder.

On Sundays there was little or nothing to do for young Bohemians alone in London, and at several houses people had said: “We shall always be glad to welcome any of your friends, Clement Scott.” The same invitation might have been given to George du Maurier, Paul Gray, Jeff Prowse, Tom Hood, or any of them.

However, both Clement Scott and George du Maurier were invited by another man to partake of a Sunday’s dinner at one of these hospitable homes. The host and hostess were particularly charming, and listened delightedly to the yarns told by the young enthusiasts.

Presently the conversation turned to the remarkable trial of a Scottish girl named Madeleine Smith, who had poisoned a cup of chocolate and offered it to the man who had been her lover—an Italian. The man refused to marry her.

She wanted to start a new life, but he wouldn't allow it, and was brute enough to threaten that if she did find a husband he'd blackmail her and show him all the letters she had written to him. The girl happened to be very beautiful, and it did not take long for her to discover an "intended husband."

The Italian, furiously angry, was on the eve of sending the woman's letters to her fiancé when the cup of doped chocolate decided matters for all time.

The case was tried in Scotland, and so great a sympathy was aroused that it resulted in a verdict of "Not Proven" and Madeleine Smith was acquitted.

George du Maurier listened quietly to the story and then launched out violently about Miss Madeleine, declaring that she ought to have been hanged, beautiful or not. When he had finished giving his opinion there was dead silence in the room. The talk fell flat, and the party broke up.

When they got outside du Maurier's friend asked :

"Do you know what you have done ?"

"Done ? What do you mean, done ?"

"Do you know who your hostess is ?"

"Mrs. —, you told me her name."

"But, my dear fellow, do you know who she *was* ?"

"No, how on earth should I ?"

"*SHE WAS MADELEINE SMITH.*" (Quick curtain.)

Two obituary notices, the work of Clement Scott, remain more distinctly with me than any others. Both were written practically in the dead of the night and in strange circumstances. We had been dining with Edward Lawson's sister at 51, Grosvenor Street. C. S. was dog-tired. He had been working hard all day, and only Miss Matilda Levy could possibly have dragged him away from his home on this particular evening. Apart from being so done to the world, the weather was perfectly filthy, it rained in torrents, and we neither of us felt inclined to turn out. However, we had to, so there the matter ended.

We were determined to get back early, so we ordered

the *coupé* for 10.15. Colonel Collins, another guest, and then, I rather think, equerry to Princess Louise of Argyll, had to go on somewhere else after an exceptionally good dinner, and to our dismay, having made his adieux, and just when we were about to follow suit, he put his head round the door and called out to us : “ It’s raining worse than ever, you don’t mind if I take your carriage, do you ? I’m not going far, it will be back in twenty minutes.”

We could say nothing except *how pleased we were*, but we thought a good deal more than that !

It must have been close on midnight before we found ourselves sitting cosily over our own fire—C. S. smoking his final pipe of peace before turning in—when a conveyance pulled up at our door, and the next instant somebody was loudly banging on it.

We waited, thinking there must be a mistake—Sunday—and at such an hour ! But no, the knocking started again, so pushing open the lattice windows we sang out :

“ Who’s there ? ”

“ Is this Clement Scott’s house ? ”

“ Yes, it is—what do you want ? ”

By this time, notwithstanding the rain which still continued to pelt down fiercely, some of our neighbours had been disturbed by the unusually late visitor and had thrust their heads out of the windows to listen to the conversation.

“ I’m from the *Daily Telegraph*, and I want Clement Scott.”

“ Well, here I am—what’s the matter ? ”

“ Matter—it’s a matter of murder.”

“ Murder ? What do you mean ? ”

“ Arthur Dacre has murdered his wife and committed suicide, and Mr. Le Sage has sent me up to you.”

It was too true ! Dacre, the half-crazy, drug-drunk actor, had shot his wife, Amy Roselle, and then turned the revolver towards himself and sent a bullet through his own head.

You may imagine what a night that meant—with the writing of a double long obituary notice, which had to

appear with every date accurate in the next (few hours') issue of the *Telegraph*.

"Sing ho" for the life of a Daily journalist—eh? But naturally it had to be, and was done.

The other "death scene" had a distinctly humorous side to it.

From the opposite side of the Square where I was walking, just for the sake of giving the doggies their usual night run, I saw a light suddenly appear in one of the windows of our house, and knew that C. S. must have retired to his dressing-room. Immediately after that a hansom cab came quickly along, and I heard a voice shouting:

"You're going the wrong side, I want No. 15."

I reached the door as a man knocked at it and was about to ring the bell.

"Who are you—what is it, please?"

"Mr. Le Sage has sent me from the office. Mr. Walter Lacy is dead and will Mr. Scott please dictate the obituary—he has sent me to take it down."

I asked the young fellow to wait inside, and went upstairs to C. S. calling out on my way, "Don't go to bed, don't go to bed. They've sent up from the office—your friend, Walter Lacy is dead."

And this is what I heard.

"My friend—my friend—dead—Walter Lacy—my friend—to die at this hour. Why the hell couldn't he choose a reasonable time, poor old chap, God rest his soul."

"Mr. Le Sage has sent a man up to take your work down in shorthand, he's waiting in the hall."

"Let him go on waiting—let him take root there. Le Sage knows damned well that I can't dictate articles—that I never *could* dictate—that I never *will* dictate—blast Walter Lacy, dear old fellow."

"Will you come down in the study and work, or will you write up here?"

"I'm not going to write a single line. I don't intend to write at all—of course I'll do it—who else can write about him as I can?—damn him—confounded, cursed

nuisance to go dying like this, one of my best pals, fine actor in parts, blast him."

"Can I help at all?"

"You? What can you do, I'd like to know—for God's sake go downstairs and hunt up all the dates you can from the Blanchard book. To think I shall never see his cheery face again! Don't you see how upset I am?—send that blackguard out of the hall, can't you—Walter Lacy—well—I suppose I must write about him—sanguinary inconsiderate of him to die at this time of night, when I want to go to bed."

I suppose we used really to think ourselves dreadfully hard-worked and altogether badly done by—well, if we did, then I can only sing with George Sand in these words of hers:

"Oh, for the *happy* days when we were *miserable*."

CHAPTER II

WARRIORS OF THE PEN

TO the last bone in their bodies journalists were fighters in the Clement Scott days. Talk about floods of ink—why, there were oceans of “best blue-black” splashed about, they drenched themselves in it.

The men of letters in Bohemia revelled in an exciting literary scrum, it refreshed them. They loved to hurl chunks of epigrammatic Whitechapel at one another. A column or so of poetically abusive language cured brain-fag, and made tired pens strong and active again.

A deliciously restless uncertainty surrounded everything, too, for you never knew who was speaking, to whom, or whether if So-and-so did meet So-and-so, they wouldn't exchange beauty spots and return to their homes labelled “damaged in transit.”

Newspaper “Warriors of the Pen” generally made an Aunt Sally of Clement Scott—they knew what a fire-ball he was. The articles he wrote were invariably controversial, and his “print battles” were marvels of skill and ingenuity.

Needless to say that whenever the exciting gunpowder of a journalistic war scented the air, enemy and allied forces entered into the fray with frenzied efforts to fan or quell the flames.

Edmund Yates, owner of *The World*, a heavily-built, large-faced man, with peculiarly thick lips and a deliciously genial manner, was an astonishingly virile writer; so forcibly did he express himself at moments in print, that people used to say he wrote with a red-hot poker. But

at least he practised what he preached, inasmuch as he allowed his staff full licence to follow his lead if they felt inclined to do so—and they did—the result being that Yates was hauled up for libel actions on several occasions.

At last the inevitable happened. A certain case went against him and he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, which he served in Holloway Gaol.

And here comes in the chivalry of the man. Edmund Yates did not write the paragraph, or whatever his accusers complained of. It was the fair hand of a woman who traced it, but Yates remained loyal to his gentle contributor. He never divulged her name; he took the onus upon himself, accepted the position as one of an editor's liabilities, and did time in the lady's stead.

Bursting into verse if the subject urged him to it, Yates once ended up a violent attack on a couple of nasty customers who had been "warned off the grass" and were then picking oakum, with some very significant lines, but as I'm told they are "luridly libellous" I'll not repeat them here.

Edmund Yates loved the playhouse and could boast the warm friendship of most of the "Old Brigade," which included the Bancrofts, the Hares, Arthur Cecil, Mrs. John Wood, Irving and nearly every well-known actor and actress of his day. He knew their biographies by heart, and he detested blunders and would trip anyone up who made them.

"2, Eaton Gardens,

"West Brighton.

"October 23rd, 1891.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT,

"The industrious inaccuracies and patient mis-statements of your friend and colleague are exhibited in a most remarkable fashion in a note which he has been good enough to say is about my mother.

"Says he, 'After her husband's death, Mrs. Yates only played for a season at the Lyceum, and then retired

to Brighton, where she died. Her connection with the Countess of Craven and her own agreeable manners attracted round her a huge circle of friends. She was the mother of Edmond Hodson Yates, etc., etc.'

"Now, my father died in 1842. My mother returned to the Adelphi in 1843, remained there several years—she was the original Geraldine in the *Green Bushes*, and then went to the Lyceum for two seasons—1849 to 1850. She did not return to Brighton and she did not die there. Though she was Lady Craven's niece, she never saw anything of her, and it was certainly no attraction to her friends, of whom she had not a large circle. Finally, my name is neither Edmond nor Hodson.

"This is a very unimportant matter, I know—to the people in general, but still—well——.

"Always yours,

"EDMUND YATES."

The end of Yates was a grim one, yet, if the choice had been given to him, I doubt if he would have selected any other.

We had been invited to the *première* of John Hare's revival of *Money* at the theatre built for him by W. S. Gilbert (The Garrick).

The cast, an all-star one, included Mrs. Bancroft and "Bogey," as his pals call Squire Bancroft. He had not yet been gazetted to the "Titled" army, so his wife was merely "Mrs." *tout court*.

We were sitting in the third row of stalls when Edmund Yates came in, and as he passed Clement he bent down and whispered loud enough for me to hear :

"This is going to recall a good many memories, my boy." Then, looking at me, he added, "Oh, nothing that you need be jealous of, Mrs. Clem," and he moved on and sat in the seat immediately next to mine.

Following him came a slimly built young fellow, with dark earnest brown eyes and an exceptionally soothing speaking voice. He sat in the stall on the other side of Yates. It was George Arthur, Lord Kitchener's personal

secretary from the moment the great Field-Marshal was forced to accept the position of England's Prime Minister of War to the hour of his outrageous murder on board *H.M.S. Hampshire*. George Arthur and Clement Scott were no relations then, but later on they developed into very near ones.

The comedy was perfectly played, and as Lady Franklin—Mrs. Bancroft—acted the inimitable scene with Arthur Cecil as Graves, and sent everybody into fits and shrieks over the dance, Edmund Yates turned to me and murmured :

“Did you ever hear such a laugh as Marie's? Isn't it enough to rouse the dead to life again? The ‘Old Brigade’—the ‘Old Brigade’—nobody will ever beat them.”

Those were practically the last words he spoke. The drama on the stage ended—the drama off began. After curtain calls had been taken and thanks made, we prepared to go, when without a sign or warning, a horribly dull, sickening thud sounded directly behind me.

I dared not move, but catching hold of Clement's arm exclaimed : “Someone has dropped down in a fit.”

“By God, it must be Edmund Yates,” he almost shouted. And, true enough, there in a heap, lying between the rows of stalls, was an inert mass which had once been the strong, burly form of Edmund Yates.

Help came along quickly, and we tried to get the poor creature into a seat again, but it was hopeless ; life had already left his limbs, and he only slid to the ground again.

Eventually they carried him to his brougham—Squire Bancroft and Dr. Playfair followed on in a cab—and his son, who happened to be somewhere in the house, took his father back to the Savoy Hotel, where Mrs. Edmund Yates was waiting for her husband.

About three o'clock on Sunday morning Edmund Yates died, and on that day Clement had to write a long obituary notice of his dear dead friend, and a cheery column on the brilliant performance of *Money* at the Garrick, both of which appeared in the Monday morning's issue of the

Daily Telegraph, and were probably read by the majority whilst they were casually munching their bacon for breakfast. I suppose few people gave a thought as to how those two powerfully graphic accounts made their way into the newspaper, nor to the severe mental strain entailed by such hustling, bustling presswork.

Another fearless "Warrior of the Pen" was Henry Labouchere, who made pots of money out of the financial articles he wrote for various papers, but principally for *The World*.

"Labby," so it is universally asserted, only started his own paper *Truth* so that he might give vent to his rabid Radical views, for no editor dared publish his matter, and he had to get rid of it somehow.

He got repeatedly turned down in the House of Commons for so furiously expressing his opinions, but in his own paper he considered himself safe. Besides, he was cute, and walled himself in by exposing numerous barefaced frauds, many of which were thrashed out in open court, "Labby" winning all along the line, until *Truth* and "Labby" were regarded as the Tribune of the people.

In the early years of *Truth* the paper appeared nearly all written in the first person, so that everybody imagined that "Labby" wrote the lot. But he didn't.

The Liberal Member for Northampton rarely contributed more than a few columns of scathing political notes, which he gloried in doing. They were quite sufficient.

Labouchere and Clement Scott were, strangely enough, devoted friends. Strangely, because C. S. was a staunch Conservative, but he loved "Labby's" independent nature, and his "don't-care-a-red-cent-for-anybody" style.

Clement Scott's dramatic criticisms began for "Labby's" paper with the first number of *Truth* and never ceased until he became exclusively engaged on the *Daily Telegraph*. I was then permitted to step into his place and remained there until we set sail for the United States, to join James Gordon Bennett's splendid go-ahead "slogger," the *New York Herald*.

We were all anonymous contributors on *Truth*. Nobody

in the office in Carteret Street, Westminster, but Horace Voules the Editor—we used to call him “’Orace,” for he hadn’t an “h” about him outside his birth certificate—knew who wrote for the journal.

In his time, Clement’s cheques were made out to “Vincent Walker” and so far as *Truth* went I was “Sarah Walker”—pretty, cuddlesome name, isn’t it?

George Augustus Sala was an extremely ugly man, with a scarlet nose. He generally sported a brilliant red necktie, and an exceptionally white waistcoat, as he said no man could commit murder wearing such a spotless garment, and it kept him from crime. But indeed Sala was anything but beautiful to gaze upon.

He and C. S. were writing a series of stories together at one time, and on a certain evening, after dining at some out-of-the-way eating-house in the West Central district, they jollied off to Sala’s apartments, and he had been complaining bitterly of a singer who had taken the rooms immediately below his.

The two *Telegraph* stars began to climb the stone steps to the top floor where Sala lived.

“Day in and day out the blessed woman bawls, and bawls, and bawls until I am driven nearly mad. I want to go in and stab her—and she won’t let me write—she won’t let me sleep—and damn her—that’s her milk,” he yelled, as they reached the lady’s door, outside of which an innocent milk-can was waiting to be taken in. Sala’s words were accompanied by a vicious kick, and the can and its contents went slopping and clattering all the way down the stone stairway.

When Emile Zola visited London for the first time during his life, Edward Lawson arranged a most refined entertainment in his honour, at Harry Lawson’s riverside residence, Orkney Cottage, Taplow.

It took place one glorious Sunday morning, and many of the *Telegraph* staff were invited to meet the eminent French author and distinguished newspaper man.

Picture Clement Scott’s dismay when Zola, after a few words charmingly spoken by Sir Edward Lawson in

the foreigner's native tongue—he and Augustus Harris spoke French better than any other Englishman I have ever known—rose to reply to them, and commenced by saying that he had been told when he came to England to make it his business to see one man in particular, and that one man, he felt proud to say, happened to be sitting at the table very near to him—his name was Clement Scott.

Edward Lawson naturally maintained his usual composure, but Beatty Kingston, the reviewer of books for the great daily journal, was furious. He followed Clement about in the gardens after luncheon, shaking his fist at him, and declaring he would get even with Zola.

“Why, I have reviewed every book he ever wrote, and to ignore me in this way—why, the man's a damned ungrateful beast, and I'm going to tell him so.”

And talking about “getting even” reminds me of Bernard Shaw and Irving.

Everybody swimming in the Ink Pond knows how wittily caustic Shaw can be, and speeches were being made one evening at an O. P. Club dinner. Irving toasted the Press. Bernard Shaw replied to it. Henry, after sundry remarks, touched on the then knotty subject of elocution, and agreed that he was of the same opinion as several others as regards founding a Conservatoire similar to the one they have in France.

Shaw's answer was a gem. He explained how impossible it was for him to be in accord with Irving, as to the necessity of founding *another* Academy, and he then proceeded to enlarge upon the question, adding that already there were two magnificent schools of this description in London. One, he need hardly say, was the Lyceum Theatre. At this, Irving sat bolt upright and looked mighty important. The other, stated Shaw, was Hyde Park. What an awful come-down! Poor Irving nearly collapsed from his chair under the table.

Like so many other celebrated “Warriors of the Pen,” Bernard Shaw could doubtless tell you pitiful stories of the early struggles of a journalist's life, of hungry heart-

hopes unfulfilled, of bitter disillusionment, but never of despair. He knew that after night there must come morning, so he fought bravely on; he conquered and he won. And Bernard Shaw, the wit, the satirist, the essayist, the writer of books and maker of plays, is one of the most daring "Warriors of the Pen" we have in our midst to-day.

Once having spoken, he doesn't care who hears, therefore it did not surprise me in the least to receive his answer to my request, asking whether I might publish some of his letters to Clement Scott:

"10th December, 1918.

"MY DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

"By all means include my letters in your memoria of Clement. We had to fight one another so fiercely over Ibsen, that I should be glad to have it known that I appreciated his susceptibility to acting as a specific art, a susceptibility which very few critics possess—in fact, some of them hate it, etc., etc.

"Sincerely,

"BERNARD SHAW."

"4th January, 1902.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,

"I am so afraid of your sending one of your young lions to my play at the Lyric Club on Monday, instead of going yourself, that I write this to make sure of your attention.

"I want you to see Fanny Brough's *Mrs. Warren*. To the dunderheads Fanny simply means comic relief, whilst the clever brigade is sometimes not too clever about acting, and is given to writing rot about Bernard Shaw, when it should be giving due credit to his cast.

"And so I am afraid that between the two sections she may not get all she deserves. Of course you know as well as I do that the comic relief stuff is all rubbish, and that *Mrs. Warren*—which is comedy and tragedy and character all in one—is just the chance she wants. But the

Stage Society and its guests means eight or nine hundred people at most to see her, but if you *describe* her performance that means a huge extension of her range.

“She has been extraordinarily good about it. Of course she refused the part when she heard what Mrs. Warren’s profession was ; but the moment she read the play she revoked her refusal and said it ought to be done, and should be done. I promise you that even if the play horrifies you (it’s really an *AWFUL* play ; but the things it says need saying), her playing will bring you out at your best—nobody else is so susceptible to the real thing in acting. You are the man to give her her due and more. Take the change out of me if you like ; I’ll forgive you anything except sparing an ounce of your gunpowder in any direction.

“Forgive this attempt to corrupt you ; but I know that Miss Brough would be disappointed if she did not know your opinion.

“Yours sincerely,

“G. BERNARD SHAW.”

CHAPTER III

EDWIN ARNOLD

MY first meeting with this great man amongst men was at Guernsey, and the friendship that for me began in this picturesque island blossomed into one that only the long sleep of mystery, which no being has ever been given the power to unravel, severed.

Edwin Arnold was a delightful optimist, a genius, with the wonderfully sunny nature, great charm of manner and a deliciously sympathetic voice throbbing with soul, that instantly suggested the dreamy temperament of the poet, romancist, idealist, and sentimentalist, but never the journalist.

It was quite unexpected, for as usual Clement Scott and I had forsaken the gay haunts frequented by Society and hidden ourselves away in a lovely little cottage literally wreathed with flowering vines and semi-tropical foliage. There, tucked away in a sweet, lazy-looking old garden—I do verily believe it must have been the shadiest and most secluded nook in all that corner—we had said to ourselves :

“ There’s triumph in Fame, but Freedom’s better,
So give us a taste of a wandering life ! ”

Where, indeed, could we have found a more ideal spot ? From afar came the sea’s drowsily monotonous swishing as the waves caressed the green grey rocks on the shore below. We felt as if we were dwelling in a veritable

Eden on one of the Insulæ Fortunatæ, or the Islands of the Blest.

Picture to yourself a glorious hour of one of the most beautiful days imaginable in sweet September, the air heavy with the scent of roses, deep red clove carnations, pale coral and white pinks, mignonette and stocks, all lingering with hungry longing for the cool refreshing dew-drench to slake their thirst after the burning kisses the sun had been raining on them since early morning.

Clement had meandered off towards the sea, and as I leaned out of my "jasmine muffled" casement an exquisite sense of calm surrounded me on every side, and the fairy hand of fancy began to paint endless pictures of joys never to be fulfilled, and hopes that died almost before their birth. *Eheu! fugaces! Eheu! fugaces!*

All at once the silence was pierced by the sound of approaching footsteps. Will they pass the foot of the hill and move towards the village yonder, or climb the summit to our haven of content? I wondered. Listening, I could hear from a field beyond the soft, even sweep of a scythe mowing through falling corn.

The footsteps were mounting the steep, nearer and nearer they came, the latch of our white wooden gate clicked, two figures passed through, and the noisy footfalls became hushed as they touched the soft carpet of our neatly trimmed lawn.

In the early gloaming, the sun bathed the scene with burnished gold, and against the brilliant clearness of its light I distinguished the broad figure of Clement Scott; the other was unknown to me.

"The other" was a man almost the same height as C. S. and much the same sturdy build. He wore a loose dark-blue yachting suit, his right arm rested on the shoulder of his friend, and beneath the peak of his yachting cap I could see a bronzed and furrowed face, a pair of earnest eyes glowing with intensity, a drooping moustache, and an unevenly clipped beard of grizzled grey.

"Where are you, dear? Come out, come out," rang the cheery voice of C. S., and the next moment my hand

was being warmly clasped in that of one of the kindest, the most attractive, and at once the most gifted men I have ever had the proud privilege of meeting.

The man was Edwin Arnold, scholar, poet, and dreamer of dreams, and no genius more unassuming, more simple in his taste, and more unaffected, ever stood before the eyes of astonished woman.

Talent inferior to his—when did he ever meet his superior?—was never belittled by this gentle-natured man. He found good in everyone and encouraged it with a power and delicacy that baffles description. What a conversationalist! Each subject he attacked was charged not only with a depth of thought, but festooned by his own poetical and incomparable fancy.

One moment he would lead you to fairyland with an enchanting Indian legend or Persian poem, the next he would make you scream with laughter at some eccentric fable worthy of the greatest wit of any age. His choice of language was unrivalled, in fact, the rhythm sounded so melodious, he almost seemed to speak in verse.

The final moments of that never-to-be-forgotten summer evening were spent in our moonlit cottage garden by the side of the magician who had kept us spellbound by the wonderful tales of his beloved India, his stories of tiger-slaying and pig-sticking, his feats with the gun after quail in the marshes, for although a poet, he could be as keen on sport as any Englishman in the land.

Edwin Arnold and Clement Scott only disagreed on one subject. Sir Edwin raved about Japan, Clement hated it, and said so frankly in a scathing article headed "Unjapaned Japan."

The author of the immortal "Light of Asia" married three times. I knew his second wife, and his third one—the pretty little Japanese lady named "Atami," and when I went with the present Lord Burnham's aunt, Miss Matilda Levy, to see her at the Arnolds' home in the Cromwell Road, almost the first pathetic question she asked me in excellent English was, "Have you been to see *The Geisha Girl*, Mrs. Scott?"

For years Edwin Arnold and Clement, the former sometimes in the position of Editor, but more often as joint contributors, worked together on the *Daily Telegraph*, and about the last big event I can remember their being intimately associated with, was the Jubilee of 1897.

Clement Scott received orders to do the start—I mean Queen Victoria leaving Buckingham Palace, Lionel Monckton paraded the streets and did the crowds, and Edwin Arnold described the ceremony inside St. Paul's Cathedral.

John Merry Le Sage, Editor of the *D. T.*, had commanded everybody to write their copy in the office, but Clement Scott flatly refused to obey his instructions. It was no use arguing, so boys were sent backwards and forwards to Woburn Square. I landed at the *Daily Telegraph* office with my type machine, and as Clement's closely-written sheets arrived, I ticked them off. I think I am safe in saying that I was the first woman to introduce a typewriter into the sacred precincts of the *D. T.*, and I remember how they all came buzzing round to watch me working it.

An amusing little incident occurred at Buckingham Palace. Clement, armed with a pass from the *Telegraph*, and also with a personal letter from a Member of the Queen's Household, planked himself in the best possible position. But an over-zealous official demanded his ticket, whereupon he produced the one given him by the newspaper people.

"Come out o' that," bawled the O. Z. O. impudently, "that's not for you. These seats are for gentlemen." Clement then unfolded the note from Lord ——. Whereupon the Official growled out: "Oh, beg pardon, you can stop where you are. *Why didn't you say you were a gentleman?*"

At the eleventh hour, with all the copy written in the third person, the order of things was peremptorily reversed. Each contribution had to be redone in the first person and signed. Clement Scott, naturally thinking the work to be already in the hands of the composers,

had gone peacefully to bed, so it was up to me to fix his part as required. And it had to be done, and quickly, too. Good gracious, how nervous it made me !

Our " Pretty Green House with the Painted Windows," as Edwin Arnold called it, used to be frequently visited by him when no other guest was there, although he did not mind a gathering of *genuine Bohemians*. He, too, like so many other artistic souls, shunned the sham of Society, with its empty, vapid talk. Many a time Sir Edwin has tried, at our luncheon table, to teach me how to eat with chop sticks, and even gave me a pair of ivory ones, so that I could practise using them by myself.

I say luncheon table, because daily journalism rarely left anyone free in the evening for dinner. After midnight there came supper-time, and that was the real and splendidly happy hour of relaxation and enjoyment.

This congratulatory letter from E. A. to C. S., on his sixtieth birthday, will perhaps convey to you the affectionate esteem in which each held the other.

" 31, Bolton Gardens,

" S.W.

" MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

" I press in with, as I doubt not, other congratulants to offer you on your sixtieth birthday, felicitations—' poor, but mine own.'

" May the anniversary return to you many times, and ever fortunately.

" I have myself lost all acquaintance with joy or fortune, and live a life of darkness. But memory casts many rays of sunshine into the gloom, and among them is the recollection of our pleasant fellowship. Whether it were as your Editor, glad of so good a pen at his command, or your comrade in Fleet Street, or your host on the yacht at Guernsey, it was always good to meet you, and gladness to be with you ; and I hear with curious incredulity that you have had enemies.

" What are they like, good friend ? I never encountered

any of my own, and yours, I think, must have been odd fish.

"You have time enough before you, I hope, for many other conquests besides that of their goodwill, secure as you are meanwhile of the affection of those who know you well.

"Yours *à tout cœur*,

"EDWIN ARNOLD."

One of my last recollections of Edwin Arnold is, unhappily, tinged with sadness and sorrow, although it happened before the dark veil had been drawn across his beautiful world, and blindness had beckoned him for ever behind the cruel curtains of perpetual night.

I was on my way to or coming from Sir Edward Lawson's room, where Clement Scott always wrote his first-night notices, and I saw Sir Edwin's door stood open, and he himself sat working at his desk.

As usual, on the ledge where pens and pencils should be, there were little saws, gimlets and various other things not connected at all with journalism. Sir Edwin Arnold had a hobby for carpentering, and the pockets of his blue serge yachting suits were always bulging with carpenter's tools—strange, eh, for a poet?

I don't remember in the least whether he called me in. I only know that I went in, and we began talking together. I then told him how much more tired Clement Scott felt after the strain and tension of a heavy first-night notice than he did a year or so ago, and how I wished he could give up the work altogether and retire. Sir Edwin told me quite angrily for him, that I was on no account to put any such idea into Clement's mind.

"No, no, decidedly no, don't think of it," he exclaimed excitedly; "he must die in harness, as I shall. Tell him I will never desert my colours, I'll stick to them to the end, to the very, very end."

"But you look splendid," I said. "I've never seen you looking better."

"Perhaps not," he answered pathetically, "I may look

all right sitting down, but don't ask me to get up and walk, for I fear you would be disappointed," and his hand moved ominously to two thick sticks that leaned against the side of his desk. The strength in his knees had almost forsaken them then.

It seems strange to say, but when speaking to me of death, as he did on many occasions, Edwin Arnold appeared to *await it with almost eager curiosity*.

He seemed anxious to find out the realities of the Other Side ; he pictured death as something exquisitely lovely, never a thing to be shuddered at.

He told me it generally took the form to him of Sleep or Dream Flowers ; it might be a glorious figure crowned with poppies—a white-robed angel with its hands full of perfumed lotus bloom, but always beautiful, always perfect to look upon. Death spelt to him calm and contentment. His final chapter in the "Book of Life" was ever headed :

" Nirvana,"
" Rest."

While trying with Edwin Arnold to probe deeper into the mysteries of the Life hereafter—about which I, too, am strangely curious, he inspired me to write these lines :

MEMENTO MORI.

" Come, Crimson Death, with poppy-laden eyes,
Kiss me with open mouth, perfumed with dreams !
Love's Land at last ! pure Love that never dies,
Our world is what it is, not what it seems !
Creep closer still, give me thy drowsy breath,
Touch me ! for this is life ! it is not Death ! "

Edwin Arnold was the one man of all other men I knew who spoke to me of the end—or the beginning—which is it ? *qui sait, qui sait ?*—as the " ease " from life.

To him it meant transition from a myth of grey shadows to an eternal glory of the world that *lives* behind the clouds.

CHAPTER IV

HENRY IRVING

“THE ‘CHIEF’ will be pleased to see you.”

I jumped up quickly and followed my leader up the crooked little flight of stairs which led to the great man’s room at the back of the Lyceum stage.

Drawn across the inner doorway I came face to face with a screen, over this hung a heavily brocaded silk curtain, and on the other side of it, in a regal-looking chair placed before a long mirror, reclined the “Lyceum Knight,” clad in winding classic draperies.

After a friendly salutation he waved me with those taper-fingered, graceful hands of his towards a comfortable, well-cushioned divan; and, catching the *sotto voce* remark of: “I’ll come back for you presently” from my earnest escort, Bram Stoker, the most faithful and devoted servant the actor-manager ever had in all his up and down career, I found myself alone with Henry Irving.

My mission was on behalf of charity, and knowing well the wonderful repute concerning all things beneficent of the man whose services I was about to enlist, I didn’t hesitate, but plunged headlong into the subject.

When less than half-way through my story Irving stopped me with: “Certainly, certainly. Put my name down for—£100.”

It fairly took my breath away. £100! Think of it! I had pictured a modest fiver, perhaps a tenner—but £100!

This sudden promise of wealthy almsgiving made my

position rather more difficult than before, as something else had to be pleaded for ; so my thanks were murmured with a wistful " but " attached to the tail of them.

" But what ? " queried Henry Irving.

" Please don't be too alarmed—there is yet another favour I must ask of you."

" Really, you are most incorrigible," he responded with that delightful smile he assumed at times.

" Sorry—but think of the greatness of the cause I plead for."

" You are an excellent advocate. Tell me, how can I be of further assistance ? "

" Your name, good sir, your name as President of our Actors' Orphanage Fund."

" It is given, most willingly and unconditionally, dear lady. I cabled you good wishes for the cause from New York."

A diplomat to his finger-tips, Henry Irving ought to have been a great statesman. In subtle wit I compare him to a modern Richelieu, in sly humour to a Talleyrand, in dominant will to a Cardinal Manning.

Born to rule, he possessed more the power of creating submission than the power of begetting love.

" Young, old, rich, poor, you must all succumb and be swayed by me," he seemed to say to himself, " and if I cannot rule you by affection, then let it be by fear, *for rule I must and will.*"

And thus by the supremacy of his will, and his extraordinary diplomacy, Henry Irving dominated and "directed the storm" for many years, until the inevitable crash came and "the world did not go well with him again." Away from the fret of work and worry, Henry Irving could be as merry as a sand-boy ; nothing delighted him more than a really good practical joke, but there had always to be a spice of devildom and mischief in it, be it understood.

He had his own intensely grim and humorous side, too. His lifelong stage-manager, Harry Loveday—who after the funeral pyre had been burnt joined Martin Harvey's

company to play a similar part—used to say that the only time he ever really knew the “Chief” to be at a loss for words occurred at a dress rehearsal of *Henry the Eighth*, in 1892, when the situation¹ appealed so strongly to his sense of humour and sent him into such fits of laughter that he simply couldn’t speak.

Wearing the gorgeous geranium pink robes of Cardinal Wolsey (that wonderful coloured silk was specially woven for Irving; he had a quantity of it left over, and Ellen Terry and several of her friends used it up for evening cloaks; I was fortunate enough to get a piece), the actor-manager stepped round to the front of the house, and up to the back of the circle, to watch the gorgeousness of the scenes as arranged by Seymour Lucas, A.R.A.

He was standing there all alone, and thoroughly enjoying the fanfare of silver trumpets, the magnificence of the processions, the choristers with their lace-trimmed albs and scarlet soutanes, the servitors, the retinue, the retainers, the rose-robed Cardinals who acted as the judges, when everything came to a sudden halt. A “silence that could be felt” swept over the whole crowd. Everybody paused breathlessly.

Irving shouted as loudly as he could: “Keep it up, keep it up. Don’t drop it. Get on with it. Why this wait? For heaven’s sake, don’t let it down at such a moment! Loveday—where’s Loveday?”

On trotted little Mr. Loveday from the wings, not a smile on his face. “I’m here, Mr. Irving.”

“What’s wrong? Who in the name of blazes is keeping the stage waiting like this?”

“It’s your cue, Mr. Irving,” replied Harry Loveday quietly.

Another little incident, which came off just before Sardou’s drama *Robespierre* saw “nightlight” in this country, showed the sly fun of the man.

In the opening act a particularly good-tempered horse had to be found to drag on a cart which contained a whole lot of merry girls and boys. One morning an extraordinary-looking yellow-haired animal arrived, led along

by its owner, who immediately started to sing the creature's praises to Irving.

"It's a fust-rate 'oss, yer honour."

"Has it ever been on the stage before, my man?" demanded Irving.

"Been on the stage?—why, 'e 'as only just finished his engagement with Mr. Tree in 'is *Musketeers*."

"Indeed, and did the horse give Mr. Tree satisfaction?"

"Satisfaction? I should rather think 'e did, sir; why, Mr. Tree says the old 'oss is a born actor, for whenever he used to come on to the stage and spout 'is bit, this 'ere old 'oss would open 'is mouth for all the world as if he were yawning."

"Ah, ah," chortled Irving. "Not only a good actor, but a good critic, too."

Irving's extraordinary diction caused endless discussion amongst the multitude—some people couldn't understand him at all. I was sitting next to Coquelin *aîné* one evening in the stalls at the Lyceum, watching a revival of W. G. Wills' *Charles the First*.

Coquelin did not know me, until several hours later, when we all met as Irving's *friends* at supper.

The French actor, who could speak English indifferently, but understood it quite well, turned to his companion and said in his own language:

"Elle, elle est charmante. Mais lui, oh mon Dieu! qu'il est drôle cet homme-là!"

What wonderful men and women I have sat near at some of those memorable banquets given by Irving in the Nineties.

Edwin Booth, Madame Modjeska, Frederick Leighton, John Millais, Alma Tadema, Burne-Jones, Whistler, Johnnie Toole, Lewis Wingfield, Jules Claretie, Edmund Yates, the Laboucheres, that at one time magnificent-looking actor, John Billington, who earned for himself the sobriquet of "handsome Jack," because all the girls went crazy about him when he played Nicholas Nickleby, and scores of others, including Tennyson, the author of perhaps the most beautiful play the Lyceum Knight ever

produced at his theatre—I'm speaking of *Becket*—Brown-
ing, John Sargent, Marcus Stone, Luke Fildes, Sarah
Bernhardt, etc. etc.

Tennyson in those days appeared to me as a person
horribly inflated with a sense of his own importance ;
Irving used to tell a very characteristic story about the
then Poet Laureate.

Fagged out and pining for a breath of air after a long
morning rehearsal, Irving and Tennyson drove to Battersea
Park, and got out of the carriage to stretch their legs.
Irving's face and figure were, of course, known to the
general public throughout England, but with Tennyson it
was altogether different ; people knew him as a poet, but
not as a man, except round and about his own home at
Freshwater, Isle of Wight.

In a few minutes Battersea became intensely interested
in Irving's presence, and naturally followed closely in his
footsteps, but it didn't take any notice of, or care a jot
for, the unknown stranger by his side.

Tennyson, however, immediately thought the crowds
were gazing at him, and turning to Irving, exclaimed
irritably : " I told you how it would be. You see they
won't let me alone." Irving only gave a chuckle in reply.

At the first big meeting to discuss the ways and means
of founding the Actors' Orphanage Fund—which took
place at our house in Woburn Square—I received a cable-
gram from Irving, who was then touring America. It
was addressed from New York, and I read it out loud to
the actors and actresses, who were all intensely amused.

" Much regret '*provincial*' engagement prevents me
being present at meeting to-day ; wish you heartiest
success, love to both—Henry Irving."

Irving's rooms at 15a, Grafton Street, were most sump-
tuous—he moved afterwards to Stratton Street, but I
didn't like those apartments nearly so well.

I saw a good deal of him at the time he had the acci-
dent to his knee, the night of the first performance of
Richard the Third, when, owing to this misfortune, the

Lyceum theatre had to remain closed until the actor had sufficiently recovered to resume the part. I often went to sit with him, for he couldn't bear to be alone, and his *real friends* were not many.

Poor little "Fussie," the faithful fox-terrier given to him by Ellen Terry when the animal was only a few weeks old, never left his master's couch, but would lie there curled up on a silken coverlet for hours at a time, perfectly happy and contented.

"Fussie" got left behind at Southampton one day; in the bustle and scurry of getting the Lyceum company aboard he somehow didn't hear his "call" and couldn't be found anywhere.

Telegrams were sent right and left, but alas! no trace of the lost dog came from anywhere. Four days after the ship had sailed, a scratching and a feeble barking were heard at the stage door of the Lyceum Theatre, and when the janitor went to look outside—there, shivering, stood the wreck of "Fussie," with bleeding paws, a shrivelled, half-starved body, and pitiful eyes, the pathos of which none but lovers of dumb animals could possibly understand.

That broken-hearted little soul had tramped from Southampton all the way to London. How he found his way, and reached the theatre door comparatively safe and unharmed will always remain a mystery.

"Fussie," true to his theatrical life, dear chap, died a most dramatic death, for when, very old and half-blind, he was making his way to Irving's dressing-room, he missed his footing, and fell through a trap in the stage of a provincial theatre.

He died instantaneously, and the vacant place left by that faithful dumb friend was never again filled by his sorrowing master.

No one can have any idea to-day of the enormous luxury always displayed at the Lyceum Theatre, even over the most minute of "props" and decorations for the stage. Irving would never tolerate sham antiques, he insisted on everything being the real and genuine thing.



HENRY IRVING AND FUSSIE.

The question of expense he never allowed to be discussed. If an artist had to carry an old missal—then an old missal it was. If antiques were necessary in such and such a play, then London would be scoured to find the exact ornament or garment or material required.

I don't know what direct difference it made to Henry Irving in *this* country when Ellen Terry decided to leave the Lyceum Theatre, but I do know that when the actor visited America without her, ticket touts were selling vouchers outside the Knickerbocker Theatre on Broadway, New York, which in the ordinary way would have cost two dollars each, for thirty cents; so he must have been a heavy loser through her absence in *that* country.

Where the priceless collection of old furniture, brocaded gowns, and exquisite draperies stored away in the property rooms and wardrobes of the Lyceum Theatre went to I don't know.

One little incident regarding the value of things at the Lyceum is brought back to my mind and may serve to illustrate the wealth within those walls.

A friend of his asked for a trifling souvenir of the old theatre, and Irving handed down from the wall, haphazard, a small engraving, which was accepted with thanks.

For curiosity's sake, that picture went to be valued by an authority on such subjects. When the picture was returned to its owner a small note accompanied it which said :

“ If you wish to sell this now, or at any future date, I am prepared to give you £1,100 for it.”

For an actor of his intellect and imagination, Irving was an extraordinarily selfish one. He never gave any other artists a chance on the stage, and I have known William Terriss and George Alexander, the one as *Château Renaud* in *The Corsican Brothers*, and the other as *Faust*, play in absolute darkness when Irving was on the scene.

Terriss used to go furiously for Irving about this, and other things besides. The night he left the Lyceum, after

having quarrelled for the last time with the "Chief," they say that he somehow managed to stick a notice up over the stage door, and when Irving arrived these words painted in large red letters stared impudently at him :

" Abandon Hope all Ye who Enter Here."

When you come to size up all his work, Irving did not introduce many new dramatists to England, nor did he leave behind many actors and actresses of note. Except for Martin Harvey, where are Irving's disciples ? Echo answers, " Where ? "

The one character made for Ellen Terry in the whole of Shakespeare's works—Rosalind, in *As You Like It*—was not in the Lyceum repertory. And yet what a Touchstone Irving would have been !

The pity of it !—the pity of it !!!

CHAPTER V

SIR AUGUSTUS DRURIOLANUS

IF ever there was a self-made man in this world Augustus Glossop Harris was "HE."

Stage reformer, born impresario, brilliantly clever, ambitious, bubbling over with infectious energy, his sole failure in life was the wild attempt to defy nature and cram thirty-six hours of hard labour into a day which only contained twenty-four, and some of those intended for rest.

I never knew anyone quite like Gus. To be with him for fifteen minutes was to feel as though you had been holiday-making by the sea for a week.

His mercurial personality exuded the most powerful tonic ever prescribed.

What he said, he meant. What he planned to do, he did.

Once Gus Harris had given his word, or made a promise, you could, as Arthur Wing Pinero wrote, in one of his triumphant farces, at the old Court Theatre, "PUT YOUR SHIRT ON HIM." You knew he was a dead cinch; you were safe in backing him a "*winner*" every time.

Nobody needed a *written* contract with Gus. He was like George Edwardes in this way.

Both were absolutely "*WORD-PROOF*," and nothing on this earth could make either go back on his pledge.

His incontestable rival, and the one that ultimately knocked Gus Harris out of court was *WORK*. This he indulged in so recklessly that its excess became almost madness; he lived in a perpetual fever of go-ahead rest-

lessness, and died at the early age of forty-four in the very heyday of his eager wooing, and at a moment when his intellectual influence was of vital value to the art he adored and served so valiantly.

It was nothing unusual for Gus to drive up to your house and sit in his carriage outside for half an hour or so, while he dictated letters, read correspondence, signed documents and generally gave instructions to the secretary who accompanied him. He never wasted a moment. Always business, business, business from morning until night; his brain never seemed to weary; it was as alert at the end of the day as at the beginning.

On one well-remembered occasion Augustus Harris started in his brougham from Drury Lane Theatre with a shorthand typist *en route* for Charing Cross Station and Paris. He wasn't through with his work when he arrived at the terminus, so he ballooned the poor thing into the train with him.

At Folkestone matters were further from the finish than ever, so, sea-sick or not, the wretched girl got shipped on to the channel boat bound for Boulogne. However, by the time he reached the French coast, he found that the scenario that ought to have been completed was only half done, and eventually the tired little amanuensis got dumped down into the Gay City without a shred of clothing with her apart from the flimsy things she stood up in, and carrying nothing more useful to her toilette than an attaché case bulging over with well-filled writing pads and worn-down pencil ends.

I can see Gus now. One minute in the auditorium of his theatre, rehearsing a Drury Lane drama or pantomime—his "topper" pushed on to the back of his head, his Inverness cloak flung on anyhow. The next moment with a wild rush and a leap he would be on the stage, his outer garments literally torn off him, and flung down anywhere, it didn't matter a jot.

Then he'd put the whole crowd through its paces, shouting and raving at them all the while like a lunatic. He simply insisted on everything being done *his* way. I have

known him stick for nineteen hours at a stretch until certain scenes in a play were as he *intended them to be*. Nothing was ever left to chance. Each detail had to be most carefully considered and thought out, every item cut and dried before the general public had the opportunity of sampling it. Gus Harris not only knew the English, but the French stage by heart ; and in addition to this he was a superb organiser, and a highly imaginative producer.

It might have been only coincidence, it might not, but this is what happened a few hours before Augustus Harris died.

He had gone down to the old Pavilion Hotel at Folkestone to put the finishing touches to the—for him—fatal *White Heather* drama. Both Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton, for so many years associated with the big Lane sensations, were with him, when he was taken seriously ill, and his wife had to be sent for.

Dr. Destin Maddick, his medical adviser—the enterprising physician who bought up the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, generally known as the "Dust Hole,"—before the Bancrofts revised and refined it—off the Tottenham Court Road, knocked it down and rebuilt on its historical site the present beautiful Scala playhouse—received a hasty summons to the bedside of his old friend.

But Gus had slipped far away beyond the science of any doctors ; he became gradually worse, and those around him knew that all hope of his recovery must be abandoned. It merely resolved itself into the question of how long.

Towards the evening of the Sunday on which he "travelled hence," Gus told his wife that he felt ever so much better and intended going up to London that night.

He attempted to get out of bed, but she persuaded him to try and rest for a little while, when perhaps he might feel stronger and more able to tackle the journey.

For a few minutes Gus listened to his wife's pleading, then, looking her straight in the eyes, he announced his very definite decision. He informed her of his determination to return to town that day, no matter what the cost of it might be to his health.

"I am going home by the last train; understand that! neither God nor man shall stop me! Neither God nor man shall induce me to remain here another night! I will go to sleep as you wish me to, but wake me in time to get up and dress. Remember, I don't intend to miss the mail."

With these words, the final ones he ever spoke, Gus turned his face to the wall. He did fall asleep, a long, long sleep, a sleep from which he never woke, the Eternal Sleep of Death.

And now comes the strange part of the story. Gus Harris did go up to London that very evening. They placed his body in a shell, it was taken up *by the mail train*, and he did arrive home that Sunday night as surely and safely as he declared he would. So to the last, his will conquered, *and he carried out his intention to the bitter end.*

Gus started off on his theatrical career as call-boy behind the scenes at Old Drury, when his father—another most gifted and talented man, also Augustus Harris by name—was running Grand Opera there. But Harris *père* had ideas outside the dramatic world for Harris *fils*. He shifted his little son off to Paris, where he put him on a little stool with a little pen behind his little ear, and made him a clerk in the famous banking house of Erlanger et Cie.

Poor Gussie jibbed loudly at this insult. He detested the little stool and the little pen, so he kicked the one over, chucked the other away, hurled the dry-as-dust ledger at the head of the astonished bank official, and joined up with a second-rate touring company, where he learned the priceless significance of French acting, and studied and sifted and found out everything he could about the working of the stage.

This is how Gus came to speak French "to the manner born," and furthermore acquired all the secrets of theatre-craft.

A genius in his way, Gus was barely more than a lad when he doffed the Fleur-de-Lys of France, and once more donning the Rose of old England, returned to London and

immediately took over the management of Drury Lane, where he had the good luck to be installed in office by the "Committee Renters."

Most people who fancied they knew a thing or two arrived at the conclusion that both he and his "abettors in crime" were stark, staring lunatic; but they were wrong. Gus never failed to get there. At one exceedingly shaky second, the ice did threaten to crack, but with a dangerous and determined swoop, he clenched his teeth, "took the jump," and landed safely the other side on *terra firma*. After that, there was no looking back, he marched on, on, on, mounting higher and higher at every step.

They made Gus a Sheriff in the Nineties, and in his turn he would undoubtedly have been created Lord Mayor of London.

What a revelation this would have meant! What a mopping-up of musty fustiness at Guildhall there would have been! But unfortunately for us, the adamant hand of Death gripped him in his icy clutches, and poor Gus was seized from our midst at the very moment when much depended on his gigantic brain-power and forcible will.

His wife, Florence Harris, owned a reputation, and lived well beyond it, for being one of the most tactless women I ever came in contact with.

She suffered from that horrible infirmity known as "green sickness." In fact, the jealous mania assumed so fibrous a growth in her, that women-folk positively feared to speak to Gus when "her ladyship" happened to be near.

I call to mind one particular scene in which both Clement Scott and I were unhappily "cast" to play most prominent parts.

Charles Morton, the dear and venerable Quaker Manager of the Palace Theatre, and his gentle little better half were expected to lunch with us, when a hansom cab came rumbling along, the driver climbed from his perch, delivered a note to Clement's secretary and stuck to the front door mat, waiting for a reply.

“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
and
Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden.
Lessee and Manager,
AUGUSTUS HARRIS.

July 3rd, 1894.

DEAR CLEMENT,

Have you a few moments to spare to-day? I want to speak to you on a most important matter. Come and split a chop with me at one o'clock, anywhere you please. Bearer will bring your answer. Love to your wife—will she come along, too?—of course we'll have another chop if she does.

Yours ever,

AUGUSTUS HARRIS.”

What luck! Here, indeed, seemed a cheery chance for a pleasant meeting.

Augustus Harris had offered Charles Morton the position as manager at the Palace, and Clement Scott had advised Charles Morton to accept the post, when he was still a “great person” at the old Tivoli music hall in the Strand.

“ The Tivoli Theatre of Varieties,
“ Strand.

“ August 16th, 1893.

“ Proprietors,

“ The New Tivoli, Limited.

“ MY DEAR MASTER,

“ I have done the deed, and accepted the post as Manager to the Palace Company, and start my new duties on Monday, the 28th, and hope to be successful.

“ I mention this to you as a reason for not producing the song, as I should like it done where I am.

“ Shall be more than honoured to see you and Mrs. Scott at *any* time at the Palace.

“ Trusting you are both well.

“ Believe me, yours always most faithfully,

“ CHARLES MORTON.”

“ With this I send copy of paper *re* my testimonial.”

We were devoted to Gus. Our united "Do come to us instead, dear friend," brought him back by return of cab, and we garlanded the luncheon table in the merriest of moods.

Poor Gus, the disease he suffered from, and which he never attempted to check, asserted itself immediately, and he started to empty every available little dish of the salted almonds, olives, sweetmeats and "corner fill-ups" I had expressly arranged near him. I knew if this had not been done he would have got up, gone a tour round and made a clearance of everything there was eatable on the sideboard.

The meal was almost over, we had enjoyed a deliciously exhilarating time. Clement and Gus were preparing to go off to the study to discuss the important matter in question over their cigars, coffee and liqueurs, when, without the faintest warning, the dining-room door was banged violently open and Lady Harris marched in. She made no attempt to greet us, but went straight to her husband.

"So this is where I find you! Here, alone, without me, lunching with the Scotts! I did not receive an invitation. I was not included in *this party*. I shall sit in the hall until you are ready to go. I have not had anything to eat—but what does that concern you?"

And the dear soul waltzed out again, apparently intent on carrying out her plan to *sit in the hall*.

Charles Morton and his wife were too surprised to speak. Clement and I could only stare in blank amazement, but Gus, livid with rage, made at once for his wife. The devil glared in his eyes.

Scarcely knowing what I did, I scrambled after him, babbling something incoherent, I don't in the least remember what. The next thing I have a recollection of is being thrust dramatically aside, and getting a full view of Lady Harris as she stepped into her carriage and drove away.

Things moved so rapidly that none of us had time to "introspect" the lady's peculiar conduct. In a towering passion, Gus hailed a stray cab and tore after his beloved spouse.

What he said to her we never knew. It must have been very much to the point, for before long he brought her back again in the humblest and most contrite mood. She expressed her regret; she knew she had been wrong; she couldn't understand how on earth it all happened, but Gus had arranged to take her out—so she told us—and had forgotten to keep his appointment. She had driven down to the theatre and been told where he had gone. She followed him—she lost her head, and the rest we knew. Poor, ill-advised, silly and undiplomatic Florence Harris! How could she ever expect to be popular with anyone?

Of course, there were intervals when even Gussie's brain demanded relaxation from the incessant everyday grind. This, as a rule, meant a flying visit to Monte Carlo or his idolized Paris, where for a few short days—scarcely ever more than this—he would plunge into the midst of the gay crowd and forget all else but eating and drinking, in the fascinating atmosphere of the Casino and the high gambling at the Club Privé. After that there would come the last inevitable cry of "*Le jeu est fait. Rien ne va plus,*" and the homeward journey again.

We met Gus just starting off on a riotous visit of this description from Victoria Station one evening. We were crossing over, too, but intended going straight through to Biarritz. Talking and laughing, laughing and talking, we arrived at Dover.

On the deck of the little steamship we sat together under the silver moonlight of the calm, wintry night, still talking, still laughing. We supped at the dear old Calais Buffet, where we parted, and for a lark gave Gus a sovereign to take with him to Monte Carlo and plank on No. *ii* for us, *en plein, à cheval*, or as he willed.

A day or two later we received a letter from Gus. He had evidently sent for a secretary and remained in the Ville Lumière for the inside of a week. We were staying at the "Palais," the delightful hotel within a few yards of the wild sea coast that reminded us so vividly of Newquay in Cornwall, and which enchanted King Edward when he visited that side of France.

" GRAND HOTEL,

" BOULEVARD DES CAPUCINES 12, PARIS.

" PARIS, le 14 February, 1896

" MY DEAR SCOTT,

" What a damned lie ! You know me too well to imagine for one instant I am in any way mixed up with any attacks upon you. I suppose some ' kind friend ' told the lie, thinking it would influence you against me, but I know you too well to imagine for an instant you would think such a thing of me. However, if ever you meet the bilious blighter, thank him on my behalf, and kick him on whatever spot is nearest to you.

" Am really off to Monte now—Grand Hotel—back in eight days. Shall be glad to hear from you. Love to your wife, wish you were both with me this minute.

" 20 - on No. ii—

" Ha ! Ha !

" Yours ever,

" Gus."

What the damned lie was, I regret I am unable to tell you, but I do wish Gus had mentioned the name of the " bilious blighter " who uttered it, then perhaps I might know more about it.

The next communication we received from him was most amusing.

" BE IT KNOWN TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, DATED
THIS 26TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1896."

" Whereas it was at some date which has now been forgotten and which is of no earthly consequence whatever AGREED, MADE, DELIVERED and otherwise decided upon by CLEMENT SCOTT, hereinafter called the GAMBLER, and AUGUSTUS HARRIS, of the same AGENT, should be trusted with coin belonging to the said GAMBLER to the amount of ONE SOVEREIGN STERLING of the currency of HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY VICTORIA, F.D., etc., etc., etc. to have and to hold same in safe custody and keeping for the said GAMBLER until the meet and proper time to use it in a manner hereinafter stated and agreed.

“ That the said AGENT should walk, ride, sail, swim, fly, or otherwise proceed to Monte Carlo at his own expense and risk the same not to affect the said GAMBLER’s purse in any way, and should there deposit the said SOVEREIGN hereinafter called the STAKE, on NUMBER ii at the tables thoughtfully provided by the good Prince of that Principality, the aforementioned STAKE and all profits accruing therefrom to be the sole property of the said GAMBLER and to be brought, carried, or fetched and otherwise conveyed to him by the unpaid AGENT at the entire risk and expense of such AGENT as beforesaid.

“ Those present depone (that is, if it is the correct thing to do) that in due course and proceeding, the said AGENT did proceed to the said Monte Carlo, and there place, stake, or otherwise gamble with the aforementioned cash in the presence of the said AGENT’S SECRETARY, much to the edification of the aforementioned SECRETARY.

“ That the aforementioned number, or numbers staked upon, failed in the first instance to ‘ come up,’ but did so on the next occasion, resulting in a net profit of 390 francs, the one half of which is due to the said GAMBLER, and is herewith sent, *i.e.*, £7 15s. 10d.

“ That the said GAMBLER may consider himself lucky, inasmuch as the said AGENT being there on the spot, did try his best to repeat this success and did fail lamentably, with the most disastrous and damnable results to the pocket of the aforementioned AGENT.

“ AND YOUR PETITIONERS WILL EVER PRAY.

“ GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL.

(Signed) “ AUGUSTUS HARRIS.”

“ SEE OVER.

“ X (his cross.)

“ WITNESSED :

“ ARTHUR STURGESS,

“ SECRETARY.”

“ I put on 1st time 29 frcs. Lost.

“ I put on your 5 frcs. and

5 frcs. of mine

" WE WON 390 fcs.

" Your half, 195 fcs. or

" £7 15s. 10d.

" My half went towards buying your wife a little remembrance of my friendship for her. I shall keep my purchase to present to her myself. A. H."

And a very pretty " little remembrance " Gus gave me. It took the form of a heart-shaped gold net-work purse, fringed with small brilliants. His monogram ornamented one side of it, and mine appeared on the other, each set with the same white sparkling stones.

During a season when the Opera House must have been crowded at every representation I wrote to Gus Harris, asking him to let me in one evening when the place was least full, as I wanted to sport a new pair of earrings which Clement had given to me. His answer could not have been more charming.

" The Elms, Avenue Road, N.W.

" July 3rd, 1895.

" You lucky young woman to have such an adoring husband. Make the most of him, and don't let him spoil you too much. I am delighted to hear he has given you such a lovely pair of earrings, herewith a box to put them in.

" You are ever and always welcome, my dear.

" Yours,

" AUGUSTUS HARRIS."

Gus Harris tried his best to induce Clement Scott to become Editor of the *Sunday Times*, when he owned the paper, with James Willing père—one of the most eccentric characters ever born, the father of Lady Le Sage, John Merry Le Sage's present wife. John Merry le Sage is still the veteran editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Going to Brighton by the midnight train one Saturday, the door of our compartment was hastily thrown open, a man jumped in, deposited two long-clothed babies on the seat opposite to us, and jumped out again.

We looked at one another aghast, for Clement Scott couldn't endure the society of screeching infants when he was travelling. These two, however, were unusually quiet; long white veils hid their faces. A second later, the man leaped back into the railway carriage.

He turned to us, pushed his hat on to the back of his head, wiped his face with one of his coat tails, and roared with laughter. Then, of course, we recognized him.

"Good Heavens, Clement Scott! Don't be alarmed. These aren't mine. I'm obliged to travel 'em this way, or I'd get a mob after me."

It was old James Willing, the *doyen* of the Bill Posters and Advertisement Contractors, taking the two *Midgets* to stay with him over the week-end at Brighton, where he lived.

The little mites threw back their veils, chatted all the way down like a couple of monkeys, and were most entertaining, the lady *Midget* in particular bristled with intelligence.

Gus Harris always wanted Clement Scott to work with him; even with the Drury Lane dramas, before Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton came on to the scene, he wrote asking C. S. to collaborate with him.

"The Elms, Avenue Road,

"Regent's Park, N.W.

"4th March, 1888.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,

"I am indeed sorry you cannot go on with the autumn drama, I was all ready for the fray, and think I had hit on a ripping idea. Of course a permanent certainty and an all-the-year-round arrangement is after all in these days a magnificent thing to have, and I congratulate you—or rather, I congratulate Sam French, who will have the benefit of your dramatic powers.

"If you will, however, as you write, give me the assistance of your experience—and who can know better than you who go, shall we say, nine times a week, to see a fresh play?—I shall be only too pleased, for 'the dramatic cats' jumps' require much following in London nowadays,

therefore I hope you will let me hold you to your promise, *i.e.*, to go over the next things I do before the time.

“ Believe me, my dear Scott,

“ Yours ever,

“ AUGUSTUS HARRIS.”

The vastness of Gus Harris's creative powers was overwhelmingly great. Who would ever have believed when contemplating the rocky and bumpy floor of the huge Covent Garden Theatre that it could possibly have been transformed into a slippery, slithering and exquisitely alluring *salle de danse*?

But bumps and lumps were entirely overcome by the happy invention of Gus Harris, who called in special designers to his aid. Between them they arranged for a most gorgeously smooth and wonderful parquet over-ground dancing platform to be constructed, one which could be laid down quite easily on the nights of the celebrated Covent Garden Fancy Dress Balls, without any fuss or trouble, and with never a join visible.

I am not speaking of the rowdy, unsavoury entertainments which took place in latter years, without the presence of dear Gus, but of the exclusive, refined dances arranged and organized by Augustus Harris himself, at which he was always present in the capacity of host and General.

The Palace Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, originally built for an English Opera House, turned out to be one of the few failures with which Gus was associated, that is, so far as English Opera went. But from the moment his idea of turning it into London's premier music hall had been put into working order, and Charles Morton enrolled at the head of affairs there as General Manager, it met with unprecedented success and universal approbation right along the line.

There never has been a greater triumph for the halls at any time. Others may have followed suit in building magnificent houses for music hall shows, but Gus Harris and Gus Harris alone originated the first grand scheme,

and everyone voted it a masterful stroke of extraordinary daring.

I can recollect well the numerous arguments that took place in our house before the final and favourable decision carried the day.

And what a splendid innovation it turned out to be ! Audiences no longer filled the stalls garbed in sloppy morning attire. The *parterre* of the palace was as richly clad by Dame Fashion as any swagger West End Theatre in the metropolis ; and Charles Morton had the satisfaction of seeing his heart's desire realized, for he also had fought and struggled hard during his memorable reign to make the music hall equal in rank and attraction to the play-house.

With Gus Harris to help, and Clement Scott to back them both up, the variety artist was soon raised to the level of the actor, and I go even further than this, and say that in several instances, by engaging theatrical " stars " to twinkle at the Palace, the *superiority* of the " single turn " comedian over the so-called legitimate stager was proved up to the hilt.

Writing on this subject some years ago, I received Alfred Butt's splendid tribute to his late chief. Read what he says about old Charles Morton. It isn't often you hear a man speak of his dead " Chief " in such genuinely glowing terms.

The first step ! That little, great *first step*, and how much it means ! Alfred Butt acknowledges it, and all must raise their hats to him in admiration for doing so.

" The Palace Theatre,

" Shaftesbury Avenue,

" London, W.

" 6th September, 1911.

" Mrs. Clement Scott,

" 15, Woburn Square, W.

" DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

" I have read with much interest your article on Music Halls in last week's issue of *John Bull*, and

entirely agree with all you say as to the work the late Mr. Charles Morton did in bringing about the evolution of the Music Hall.

"It was Charles Morton, and Charles Morton alone, who raised the Music Hall from a doubtful class of entertainment, where vulgarity and coarseness were the leading features, to one of refined and high-class entertainment, that could be patronised by women and children.

"There is no doubt that in later days his successors, amongst whom I hope I may number myself, have still further improved the tone of the Music Hall, which I think to-day ranks on an equality with the Theatre, and indeed, in many cases gives a much brighter and more wholesome performance, but in my opinion it has been easier for his successors to continue this upraising than it was for the late Charles Morton to make the initial move.

"In conclusion may I express my appreciation of your statement that the Palace Theatre still remains unrivalled at the head of a long list of Variety Houses. Certainly my best endeavours will always be used to retain the Palace in this coveted position.

"Kind regards,

"Yours sincerely,

"ALFRED BUTT."

Again we must raise our hats to you, now "Sir" Alfred Butt.

In the glorious red sunset of a warm summer evening, whilst driving along the Avenue Road from Stanmore, where we had been spending the day, our attention was attracted by the most curious spectacle of something in the form of a man trying to mount a bicycle.

Clad in palish lemon coloured trousers, a moss-green velvet coat, a Tyrolean hat with a tall feather in it perched jauntily on his head, with ankles disclosing bright purple socks and feet thrust into patent leather pumps, this extraordinary creature presented a truly coquettish and decidedly rakish appearance.

"Why, it's Gus Harris!" we cried, and what a chorus

of laughter we set up ! Nobody in the world but he would have had the courage to be seen in a public thoroughfare arrayed in such eccentric attire. He was preparing to work off his seething energy in a twenty-mile ride, as, being the Sabbath, he could find no outlet for his electric magnetism and had nothing whatever to do.

Gus welcomed our approach with genuine delight, and we strolled up the leafy, flower-scented lane leading to his private house, "The Elms." On one of the lawns we found Lady Harris, surrounded with the remains of tea, and near by stood a roulette table, which Gus instantly rushed at and set the wheel spinning.

I am sure I didn't say more than what fun it must be to own so amusing a plaything, but that "bit of fun" proved quite sufficient, for within a few days of our visit we had a duplicate of that table sent to us. How characteristic of Gus ! In friendship he was one of the most generous of men, but in business a regular skinflint.

We never saw Gus alive again after that Sunday. Early the following week he left London for Folkestone—his home-coming I have already described to you.

The stage lost a loyal friend and a princely benefactor in Gus Harris. Since his untimely death King Pantomime has never reigned so merrily. The popularity of the Royal Opera House waned, and with the passing hence of the graceful and beautiful Lady Ripon, who did so much for the world of music, it eventually got extinguished altogether. The flame is about to be re-kindled—may it burn as brightly as it did in those days say I.

But as for the great world-famed sensational dramas at Drury Lane, they have only met with intermittent and half-hearted success.

The brain and backbone of the whole organization disappeared without the presence of Augustus Glossop Harris, and there has never been anyone else capable, or clever, or inventive enough to fill his still untenanted chair.

The contemplated change of proprietorship may perhaps make a difference in the years to come—who knows ?

CHAPTER VI

“ HUMMING ” BIRDS

IN the Eighties and the Nineties men and women wrote with nibs dripping unmistakable black ink, not with pap-ladles moistened with milk—and diluted at that—as they do to-day.

However, an extra expert couple of skilfully abusive—and therefore most eagerly read—quill-drivers of the hour were Augustus Moore, who ran a once-a-week *chef d'œuvre* called *The Hawk*—the title is quite sufficient and needs no further proclamation—and James, otherwise “ Jimmy ” Davis, a lawyer by profession, who brought into the world an equally sparkling masterpiece which he christened *The Bat*. How the wings of both these pets did flap !

So far as *The Bat* went, the theatrical crowd that James Davis attacked was far too wise to come to cues with him, so that bright creature’s propellers remained unsinged until the animal died, much to the joy of the Profession, and others in general. I think there did come a time of trouble over some racing question or other—but not with theatre people.

Augustus Moore was extraordinarily fluent with his pen, which unfortunately for him would travel on the slant, instead of on the straight, and subsequently steered him into some very steep and rough waters.

Personally I felt rather partial to Gus Moore. He could write uncommonly interesting stuff when he liked, and at a time when he was hard pressed for money he did

some really excellent paragraph work for me. But it had to be cautiously edited before the printers got away with it.

Perhaps my regard for Augustus Moore arose from the very stimulating reason that he gave me my first start in life as a journalist.

It was an exceedingly small affair, but it urged me on to try again and taught me the truth of the French dictum : "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.*"

Gus Moore, in describing some rather eccentric experiences concerning theatre passes, or orders, whichever you like to call them, recalled to memory one which my father used to tell. I wrote it down, sent it boldly to *The Hawk*, and challenged the editor to print it.

He did, and he sent me 7s. 6d. in payment for my contribution.

The "pass" story I told him concerned the man who first introduced morning performances —afterwards spoken of as *matinées*—into this country.

His name? E. T. Smith, the boisterous, harum-scarum *entrepreneur* who ran Cremorne Gardens, Astley's Circus, the Lyceum Theatre, and I don't know how many more shows at the same time.

He happened to be a client of my father's and godfather to my eldest brother.

E. T. Smith and my parent were dining together in some grill-room in the Strand, and E. T. S. spotted a man whom he knew on the opposite side of the room.

"See here, Brandon, I'll make you a bet that fellow will come across presently and ask me to give him seats for the theatre, If he does I'll give him one he won't forget in a hurry."

Sure enough, a little while later, over he came, and begged for some "complimentaries" for the Lyceum.

Smith, having finished his dinner, called for a pen and ink, and solemnly turning over his used cheese-plate smeared these words on it with the wrong side of the nib :

"Pass two to the Pit—signed E. T. Smith."

That plate was duly presented at the box-office, and tickets were given in exchange !

And that “ china pass ” also gave me an entry into the envied land of journalism via *The Hawk*, by favour of Augustus Moore.

By the way, Gus Moore married the only sister of Lionel Monckton, the well-known composer of so many popular songs and at one time musical critic and an all-round member of the *Daily Telegraph* staff.

She was an eerie, ethereal-looking soul with a white, waxen face, eyes teeming with intelligence, and a brain brimful of quaint thought and literary talent.

She idolized her husband, and wrote several extremely clever but somewhat risky books, to say nothing of the talk she caused in the world with her vigorous diatribes against Society and its doings.

James Davis, the other gay newspaper recorder—what a queer, unevenly balanced bundle of wit and intellect he was !—took a Quilp-like delight in hashing up any indiscretions he could about celebrities who had gone the pace thoroughly in their youth, but had since settled down quietly to the middle-aged spread and accepted respectability.

Jimmy published “ pasts ” recklessly, and served them up piping hot with his own *sauce piquante*, for sheer mischief’s sake.

Decent advertisers thereupon jibbed at the journal ; they refused to take spaces in it, and as no revenue came in from this direction, the paper starved. Many a happy sigh of relief must have been breathed when the funeral cards were issued and a memorial stone announced that *The Bat*, dearly beloved and cherished child of James Davis, was defunct.

The Bat’s parent didn’t die at the same time, though ; not a bit of it, quite the contrary. He bought a new lease of life, in fact, he bought everything and anything with so much thoroughness, and accumulated debts with such persevering dexterity, that eventually he filed his own petition for bankruptcy. And then, more wonderful still, James blossomed forth into a brilliant musical comedy librettist, and wrote success upon success under the

sarcastic pseudonym of "Owen Hall," and I don't doubt for a moment he really and truly did.

The Gaiety Girl came first, and then *The Geisha*, with its well-remembered setting by Sidney Jones. This production at Daly's Theatre by George Edwardes turned out to be one of Owen Hall's brightest streaks of good fortune. Then followed *The Greek Slave*, and once more that delightful effort *Florodora*, accompanied by the haunting melodies of Leslie Stuart's charming music. After *The Girl from Kay's* the popularity of Owen Hall flickered; he made a few more attempts at failures, and finally snuffed out a sad and disappointed man.

"Bristol Hotel,

"Burlington Gardens.

"April 27, 1900.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,

"Thanks for your letter very much. I am glad you liked *Florodora*. I missed you on the first night, but oh! the next morning—selfishly be it said—I missed you still more.

"This piece was to me the most important of any. Had I failed to satisfy the public the natural observation would have been 'he is no good without George Edwardes.'

"I, too, think highly of Evie Greene, but I have not quite suited her.

"Some day, when she gets the right part—a Mademoiselle St. Genè with music—she will knock London. The character she now plays could be done by any *ingénue* who could sing a song. The fault is mine, not hers.

"Of course dramatic criticism is dead!!!

"There is not one paper which publishes an article on a new piece of any value to author, or artist, or of any interest to the public. And the natural result is that newspaper notices have no effect whatever. The play and the company seem to have outgrown the Press. People go to see for themselves, no matter what the criticisms may be.

“ The critics seem to have set themselves the task of criticizing the public taste ; not the piece or the performer, and the public resents the impertinence.

“ The only critic now of a daily who is at all in accord with the public feeling is the nobleman who does the ——. He seems to have the sense to appreciate at once what will be the verdict, and he does not abuse, but goes with the people who will like an entertainment, rather than tell them that they are ignorant asses for so liking it.

“ But against this, his literary style is that of a commercial traveller in a great hurry.

“ What can be done ?

“ I don’t care a dump.

“ Yes I do——

“ Why the —— don’t you come back ?

“ Yours ever sincerely,

“ JAMES DAVIS.”

“ Clement Scott, Esq.”

James Davis left a considerable number of mourners behind him amongst the fair sex. I have a vivid recollection of Cecil Raleigh ringing me up the morning Jimmy’s obituary notices appeared in the newspapers to tell me he had just been cycling round St. John’s Wood, and had only then realized the greatness of James Davis, for nearly every little blind in every little house in the neighbourhood was drawn down.

“ Frank Danby,” as Julia Frankau was known to the literary world, and James Davis were brother and sister.

Julia Frankau, in addition to owning all the earthly goods that Dame Fortune could bestow on her, also possessed an intensely humorous side to her nature, and the idea of James as a bankrupt naturally appealed to her as being quite beyond the pale of an ordinary comic situation.

On one occasion she introduced Jimmy Davis to some astonished acquaintances as “ My Brother—of course you all know my brother. What ? You don’t know my brother—not MY BROTHER, THE BANKRUPT ? ”

I once bumped into this brilliant woman as she was coming out of the cloak-room of a very fashionable dinner, but unfashionable supper, restaurant. This was the supper hour.

"Goodness, Julia, I never thought to see a soul here," I exclaimed.

"That's the reason I came here, too," she wittily retorted.

Julia Frankau's sparkling orations on any subjects were simply amazing. Her easy flow of language was marvellous, and that quietly penetrating voice of hers made listening always a treat.

To some Julia Frankau must have been a most mystifying contradiction, but to those who had the privilege of calling her friend, she remained ever a fascinating, dear and lovable study of sweet womankind.

CHAPTER VII

W. S. GILBERT, GEE-GEE AND OTHERS

FOR his *Bab Ballads*, his fairy plays, and his fantastic "books of the words," we owe Gilbert many thanks, but there is one debt in particular, outside all the others, for which we should *sometimes* be quite grateful.

W. S. Gilbert's insistence that every syllable should be heard, and never slurred over, when any of his words were being sung, led to a complete change of study for pupils.

Teachers commenced to realize the value of expression in the lyrics as well as in the music, and it became unnecessary to inquire in what language Miss Triller was singing, or to ask "is that a French song Mr. Cadenza has just favoured us with?"

And, talking of French, Gilbert made a hideously funny reply to a lady who, fortunately, did not understand the language.

"Oh, Mr. Gilbert, please tell me the name of that wonderful thing they are playing now," gushed a female suffering from a bad epidemic of spots on the face.

Gilbert stared hard at her for a second, and then, with his eyes riveted to her pimples, answered cynically:

"I think it is *La petite Vérole*," and the poor soul went into paroxysms of joy over such an illuminating response.

W. S. Gilbert introduced Julia Neilson to the theatre-going public, and I don't suppose two more beautiful women ever stood side by side on any stage together than

the day Julia Neilson played Cynisca to the Galatea of Mary Anderson in Gilbert's play *Pygmalion and Galatea*, acted for one afternoon only at the Lyceum Theatre in the late Eighties.

Both actresses were divinely tall and most exquisitely lovely. The sensation they created can never be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to see them, and their picturesque Greek draperies added further to the charm of their remarkable beauty.

Such a bundle of mixed emotions one didn't often meet. You never knew exactly whether Gilbert would take a joke as it was intended, or seriously.

At the O. P. dinner given in his honour a year or so before his tragic finale, Gilbert's face wore a most fiendish expression. My companion asked me anxiously what I thought of him, and I suggested that possibly the *music* might be disagreeing with his digestion.

"The music? The music? Why the orchestra is playing nothing but selections from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas."

"Exactly, and Gilbert can't hear a single one of his lines with any of them. Isn't that enough to drive the man crazy?"

I think it must have been the sweet voice of Isabel Jay which coaxed the first wan smile of the evening from him.

"I'm just off to see Gilbert's *Broken Parts*," wrote Frank Burnand to Clement a few weeks after the production of W. S. G.'s poetical play, *Broken Hearts*.

Burnand's joke appealed to Clement Scott as being good enough to quote, but Gilbert didn't view it in the same way, and he expressed *his* opinion in a very angry and peevish letter.

" Garrick Club.

" MY DEAR SCOTT,

" I consider the article you have written in yesterday's news most offensive, and likely to cause a great deal of injury to my play. Burnand's attempt at wit is silly and coarse, and your desire to bring it into prominence

in the worst possible taste. I am not by any means a thin-skinned man, but in this case I feel bound to take exception to your treatment of me and my serious work,

“Sincerely yours,

“W. S. GILBERT.”

I suppose you remember Gilbert's remark when he read of the fanatics in petticoats who chained themselves to railings and shouted: “Votes for Women”?

“I shall follow suit,” said he. “I shall chain myself to the rails outside Queen Charlotte's Hospital and yell, ‘BEDS FOR MEN.’”

I like to think of Gilbert as the kindly creature of impulse I knew him to be, although that knowledge came to me at a time when the dark veil of sickness had drawn itself with such a deadly grip around my home.

At intervals, when the news of Clement's illness ultimately became public property, Gilbert's cards would be found in the letter box with messages of gentle inquiry written upon them. It puzzled me to know how they got there, until one afternoon, going out of the door, I met W. S. G. face to face coming up the steps.

Utterly confused, he turned to go away, but I stopped him, and when I told him of Clement's dangerous condition he was genuinely overcome.

From that moment I don't think Gilbert missed many days without calling, writing or telephoning. He helped me with my work, he wrote articles for me, and to his last hour I am sure he never breathed a word of what he had done for me.

All the bitterness of the past was forgotten and put aside, old feuds were buried, and in the historical church at the end of Ely Place, Holborn, dedicated to the memory of Saint Etheldreda, where the funeral service was “chaunted,” the one being whose eyes were most full of tender tears was Gilbert—at least, that is what friends told me, and I believed them. Doesn't this note strengthen my belief?

" Grim's Dyke,

" Train, Euston to Harrow.

" Harrow Weald.

" Telephone, 19 Bushey.

" September 18th, 1903

" MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

" I am glad you like the article. It is true, every word of it. Will you let me have proofs of the others, which I hope will be of some use to you ?

" I return the letter you sent me. Thank you for letting me read it. How relieved I should be to hear good news of your poor invalid. Are you sure there is no hope that you will ever be in a position to give me any ?

" Very sincerely yours,

" W. S. GILBERT."

When I hear others sneering at Gilbert's heartlessness, I recall those generous acts of his to Clement Scott. Those journeys that he made so frequently, just to get a stray bit of news of his old comrade, his almost affectionate attitude directly he heard the truth, and I smile to myself, as I've smiled so many times when I've jostled against those queer people who live in such a tiny world of their own, a world that is full of nothing beyond " I know," " I am sure," " I am certain," a world which is minus all that is sincere and lacks facts. As Ellen Terry is so fond of saying :

" *FAX are FAX, and you can't get away from 'em.*"

At 28, Dorset Square, the cheery home of George Gross-smith, another old Savoyard and very dear friend of the Scotts, we certainly spent some very merry hours. Little Gee-Gee and his dear wife were general favourites until George took to buffooning so extravagantly on the slightest provocation, and then his pals fought shy of him, for he bored them stiff.

The imitation that Nelson Keys gives of the present George Grosssmith is far more like Gee-Gee *père* than it is of his son.



A study from memory

*Edith Brad
Hawthorne*

From an original sketch by Leslie Ward

[By permission of "Vanity Fair"]

GEORGE GROSSMITH AND CORNEY GRAIN.

[Facing p. 72.]

“ 28 Dorset Square, N.W.

“ Here you are ! I have signed another batch of photos for your stall. Now for goodness’ sake don’t let me go cheap, I can stand anything but that. I shall probably come along and bid for myself during the course of the day, just to give an estimate of my real value.

“ Yours ever,
“ GEE-GEE.”

To hear Gee-Gee and Corney Grain, the one a tiny mite of a man, with nothing so large about him as the sense of his own importance, the other a big burly giant of a fellow, giving imitations of one another at the piano sounded too ludicrously comical.

I have heard Barclay Gammon likened to Corney Grain in appearance, but Gammon no more resembled Corney than he did Eric Lewis, who also indulged in the same form of entertainment at one time—the types were absolutely different.

Corney stood, I should think, well over six foot high. He had lightish brown hair, an enormous stomach and an almost boyish face built like a large bird without any fluff on it. And he had a habit of whistling some of his words out of the corner of his mouth, rather like Charlie Brookfield did. Barclay Gammon was a shortish, thick-set man, clean-shaven, very dark, with an exceedingly quick-breathed bronchial delivery.

From earning 25s. a week as a Bow Street shorthand reporter, to a jump of something like £25 a week as the leading character in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, could never be totally forgotten by Gee-Gee ; and when the £25 blossomed into £125 he lost his balance for awhile, and would do the most extraordinary things.

He thought it frantically funny to send yards and yards of telegrams to admirers who wrote asking for his autograph.

At a rather representative Sunday evening Bohemian party the host invited George Grossmith to “ take over the piano.” George did so with rather an ill grace, and after-

wards complained bitterly about the way he had been treated.

"Why, do you know these *upstarts* used to pay me thirty guineas for doing a turn like that," he whined to "Brookie," in an appealing way.

"Really, old chap, but you see they are *out* of the asylum now," retorted Brookfield.

Gee-Gee billed himself one afternoon to give imitations of the late John Parry and Henry Russell at the small St. James' Hall, and after giving his version of how Parry did things, he announced that he would now sing a song after the style of the late Henry Russell (an uncle of mine, by the way). Whereupon a lusty voice from the stalls bawled out :

"What the devil d'you mean, young man ? I was here before you began your antics, and if you mean I'm dead, I'm not, and I'm ready to call you a liar."

Old Russell was a sincere and valued friend of the *Telegraph* Lawsons, and especially of J. M. Levy, one of the original proprietors, and father of the first Lord Burnham.

Henry Russell had been told by J. M. L. to go and report as to Gee-Gee's justifiability in billing himself as an entertainer after the style of John Parry and himself.

Only one alternative rested with George Grossmith when challenged by the "old vet," as his comrades named him. He begged him to mount the platform and give an account of himself in one of his own songs. But Henry Russell could not be so unkind. When he stepped on to the stage, he only shook hands with Gee-Gee and complimented him on his excellent mimicry of John Parry.

Gee-Gee was devoted to his father, also a Bow Street shorthand reporter, and after reading the obituary notice in the *Telegraph* he wired to Clement Scott.

"Heartfelt and grateful thanks for your sweet appreciation of my dear father, wish he were alive to read it.—George Grossmith."

Gee-Gee went sadly to pieces after his wife died, and I used to meet him wandering round Russell Square, where he then lived, looking very sorrowful and pathetic, poor chap.

"Take her away, she's not a bit of use," everybody shouted when Jessie Bond attended an audition at the Savoy through the introduction of George Grossmith.

They soon altered their opinion when Jessie Bond scored all along the line and became one of the theatre's biggest favourites.

"28, Dorset Square, N.W.

"DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

"Bravo! That article was a smasher, and I feel all the better for reading it. Having nothing better to do the other day, I visited a penny wax show and found that I was not even represented in the Chamber of Horrors.

"After that I paid an extra sixpence—having had a splendid house the night before—to have my fortune told by a rather nice lady palmist.

"She informed me that my line of life was more than extraordinary, and if half of what she says comes true, then, my dear friend, I am going to outlive the present generation by many hundreds of years.

"Again, my hearty congratulations on your stirring work. My word, you can pile it on! Don't you ever turn that side of your pen on to

"Yours ever and always,

"GEO. GROSSMITH."

Henry Russell, a marvellously hale old fellow, lived for a good many years after his retirement at Boulogne, where we stayed several week-ends with him. When well over seventy, and he had again taken up his abode in London, he used to roll up in his carriage to see us, eat a hearty meal, brag that he smoked twenty-five cigars a day, that his hand was as firm as a rock and that he'd never had a day's illness in his life.

Some of Henry Russell's descriptive songs were perfectly wonderful—at least he made them sound so by the dramatic

manner in which he sang them and the exquisite finish of his playing.

He wrote two or three patriotic compositions with Clement Scott, notably "Here Stands a Post" and "Our Empress Queen." But, of course, his "Cheer, Boys, Cheer" will never be forgotten. It ought to be revived now—it is the moment for it.

"United Club,
"Boulogne-sur-Mer.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

"Enclosed is an account of the doings of loyal Boulogne. The streets are a mass of bunting—the display gor-gi-ous, and I must add the French deserve our eternal gratitude. "Our Empress Queen" was performed by 300 musicians—Hats off!—and a tremendous encore.

"The words translated into French *wret-en* by Monsieur *Shott*," music by Monsieur *Rouselle*. Good spelling, eh? There were at least 8,000 people present—and "*GORD SHAVE DE QUVEEN*" was really grand. Will the (by your aid) description be news for your Friday paper?

"Ever thine,
"HENRY RUSSELL."

"Tuesday night."

Oh, those days, those days! How glorious it was to wander through the wild flowery fields of Bohemia, the land that the poet Jeff Prowse called in verse "The Beautiful City of Prague."

"How we laughed as we laboured together,
How well I remember the day.
Our outings in midsummer weather,
Our winter delights at the play.
We were not over nice in our dinners,
Our rooms were up rickety stairs,
But if Hope be the *Wealth of Beginners*,
By Jove! we were all millionaires.
Our incomes were very uncertain,
Our prospects were equally vague,
Yet the persons I pity, who know *not* the City,
THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF PRAGUE."

CHAPTER VIII

WILLIAM TERRISS AND THE ADELPHI THEATRE

THURSDAY, December the 16th, 1897—shall I ever forget that black, black day?

For two events this memorable date must ever remain indelibly imprinted on my mind. No dawning could be darker, no evening more o'ershadowed than that fatal 16th of December, 1897.

By noon I felt instinctively that I was standing on the threshold of some ghastly calamity. I knew the curtain was about to rise on the first act of a drama that has never been written—a drama which, unhappily, I saw acted through to the sad finale. That story is told elsewhere and will be a surprise to many.

By midnight I had seen one of the truest, the best and dearest friends we had, lying dead in the mortuary of the Charing Cross Hospital. He had been stabbed by a mad brute who is still alive and being well cared for by the nation.

“No, no, let him loose amongst the crowd,” shouted someone loudly, as we heard the verdict of “Guilty, but insane and not responsible,” spoken by the foreman of the jury in the court of the Old Bailey after the trial of the assassin Prince, or Archer (the other name he sometimes went by) for murder. And as sure as there is a sky above us that creature would have been lynched could the people have had their way.

It seems but yesterday—for I can recall it all so vividly

—that I was sitting alone in the grill room of the Inn's of Court Hotel.

That morning I had received two letters, sent to me by hand. The first one from Edward Lawson, the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, read as follows :

“ 12 Berkeley Square,
“ December 16th, 1897.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ You are not to worry. As I telephoned you this morning, get Clement away as soon as you can, and let him write some cheery articles from abroad. I have told Le Sage to arrange for the theatres. Have just returned from the office, and am now going back to Hall Barn.

“ Love to you both,
“ Yours always,
“ E. L.”

I had fulfilled that part of my mission. I had got Clement away the same day by the afternoon service to Paris, *en route* for the South of France. That is why I was alone now.

The second letter came from William Terriss, and this is what he said :

“ Adelphi Theatre,
“ December 16th, 1897.

“ DEAR MRS. CLEM,

“ I want to see you both badly. If you have not time to come round to my room at the theatre to-night I'll run up to you in the morning. Please accept this —and my love to you and Clem.

“ Yours ever,
“ WILL.”

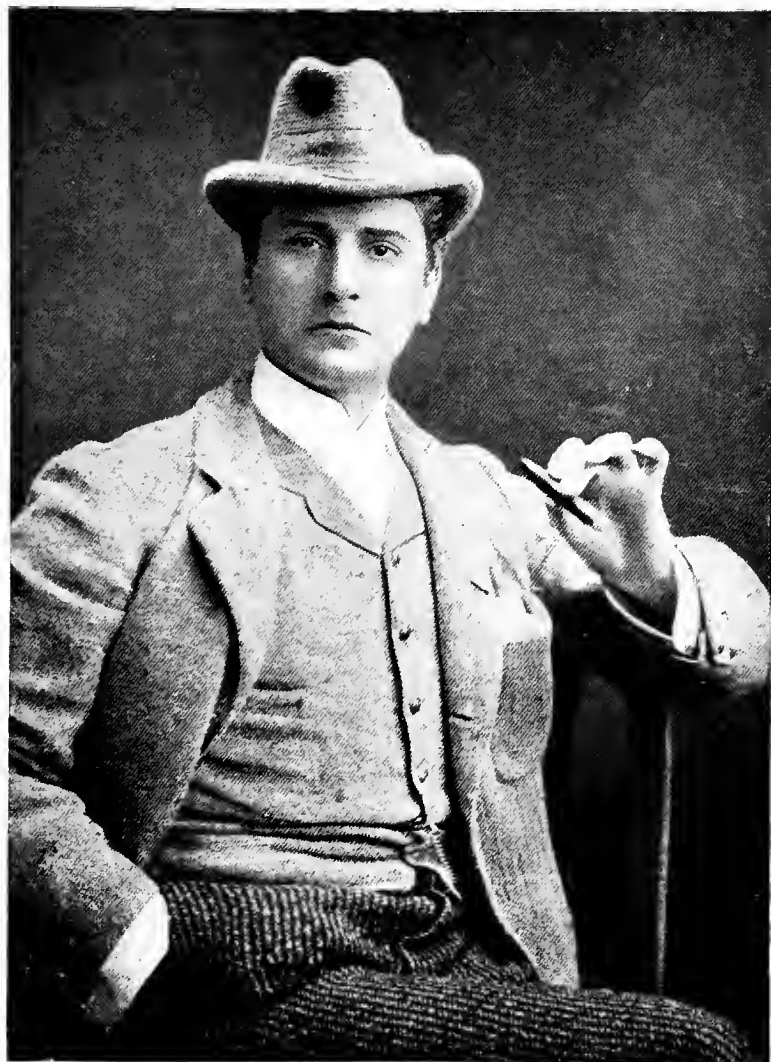


Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis.

Thomas W. Terriss

WILLIAM TERRISS.

[Facing p. 78.

The "this" was a massive silver Wassail bowl. On one side of it the inscription reads "From Will Terriss, to Margaret and Clement Scott." On the other side is his favourite quotation, "Shadows we are and shadows we pursue."

In answer to the request he made in his note, I had told him that I would come round to the stage door that evening; and I went to the Inns of Court Hotel, intending to keep my appointment at the Adelphi after I had dined.

As I sat there thinking, thinking, thinking, I heard a waiter say to someone he was serving at another table:

"Yes, sir, it's true right enough, he was murdered just as he was going into the theatre." And the fellow turned away carrying some empty dishes in his hand.

As he passed me, involuntarily I put out my hand to stop him.

"Murdered at a theatre, did you say? Who has been murdered?"

"William Terriss," replied the man in a dull, unmoved tone, and then walked on.

I nearly shrieked with horror. I couldn't believe it. The thing seemed incredible! Only a few hours ago he had written to me and here was I on my way to thank him for his beautiful gift! I simply could not endure to wait there any longer. Dinner, the paying for it, everything was forgotten.

I rushed from the place, hailed a cab—there were no taxis in those days—and drove straight to the Adelphi.

There all was silence. The framed bills hanging outside the theatre had already ugly strips of paper plastered across them stating that in consequence of the sudden death of William Terriss the run of William Gillette's drama, *Secret Service*, must be indefinitely stopped.

I stood staring at these hideous black and crimson signs, trying hard to make myself believe in the truth of them, when at that instant, as if to clinch the thing into certainty, the air was rent with raucous voices of newspaper boys shouting about the streets:

"Murder of William Terriss." "Actor stabbed to

death." "Assassination of William Terriss." "Horrible murder in the Strand," etc., etc.

The stage door-keeper told me that the Brothers Gatti, Agostino and Stefano, lessees and proprietors of the Adelphi Theatre, were absolutely broken with grief, and had gone home in a state of collapse to 10, Bedford Square. Everybody who knew Will Terriss loved him.

From Agostino Gatti I learned how the people's idol, while in the act of unlocking the pass door in Maiden Lane which led to a private stairway up to his dressing-room, had been stabbed from the back, clean through the lung, by a vain, jealous maniac, named Prince, and that the actor had died almost instantaneously from hemorrhage.

Jessie Millward, "leading lady" at the Adelphi, told me that she was dressing to go on to the stage when she heard a strange noise from below, and rushing from her room downstairs, was just in time to save the half-dead body of Will Terriss from falling to the ground. Within the next few moments she sank at the foot of the stairway, the lifeless form of Terriss still resting in her arms.

On a ring attached to my purse is a key.

Asking sweet Ellaline Terriss to give me some trifling souvenir of her adored father, Ella slipped this key into my hand at Euston Station just before midnight, when Clement Scott and I were starting on a trip to America.

It is the one which unlocked the side door of the Adelphi Theatre. It still hung quiveringly in the lock when Terriss received his death blow. It has never left me since his idolized daughter gave it to me.

What a handsome chap! What a happy-go-lucky, don't-care-a-hang-for-anybody-or-anything fellow! For Bill Terriss—*les convenances* simply didn't exist.

Terriss, in his well-worn brownery-whitery, speckled tweed suit, his soft felt hat—that shape had not been christened "Trilby" then—pulled down jauntily over one eye, puffing away at his old briar pipe, was a very familiar Strand figure in those days. And *lawdy*, how that pipe did "niff!"

It always reminded me of Ellen Terry and her ever bulging bag—not because her bag “niffed,” but that she never went about without it.

Terriss’s dressing-room was about the only one which Clement Scott did not mind going into for a chat and smoke. As a rule he detested going behind the scenes, he hated the illusions which he wove from the front of the house being shattered and destroyed.

On one occasion we mounted the little Adelphi stairway and knocked at the door. “Come in,” roared Terriss, and in we went.

To use a theatrical expression, Will was putting the “slap” on—or, in other words, “making up.” He stood before his looking-glass stripped to the waist. Clement tried to shoo me out, but Terriss objected. “What does it matter, old man. It’s a very fine figure, and if your wife doesn’t mind, I’m damned if I do.”

It may have been a morbid thing to do perhaps—going to see the last of William Terriss. But I have never regretted the doing it. Death could not have been revealed to any living soul in a more beautiful form. The actor was good enough to gaze upon in life, but dead he looked superbly handsome.

George R. Sims drove me down to the funeral in his coupé. He was quite unnerved by the tragedy, but everybody suffered in the same way. The murder had demoralized all Terriss’s friends.

The wind blew frantically cold and bleak. First of all we went to Bedford Park where the Terriss family lived, and then followed in the cortège to Brompton. From the house to the Cemetery, crowds in thousands lined the roads, making progress very slow and difficult.

I have rarely seen a more impressive sight, but Terriss was one of the most loved of men, and literally worshipped by the public as a stage hero. No girl’s sanctum could be called complete without two or three of his portraits adorned the walls.

As we were coming out of the little chapel after the service had been read, someone took hold of my arm.

It was Edward Lawson, afterwards Lord Burnham; he too appeared to be in a dreadfully jerky and nervy state.

"Come along, my dear, don't go to the graveside. I've had enough. It's too awful—come along." I did as he requested, and together we went in his brougham to 51, Grosvenor Street, where his sister, Miss Matilda Levy, still lives.

In answer to my letter of apology to G. R. S. for deserting him, he wrote :

"I was relieved to get your kind note. I searched the Cemetery for you until I was told that you had taken an earlier cue for your exit."

As a matter of fact I believe the scare created by that brutal murder was justifiable, for we were told that a list of intended victims written on blue office paper had been found on the criminal Prince, and that the names of Henry Irving, Clement Scott, George Alexander, and several others figured there as possible prey for his insanity. But Fate decreed that Terriss should be the first, and the murderer seized his opportunity when acting as a super in the American melodrama being played at the Adelphi at the time.

A weird incident happened to me in connection with the Terriss murder. I'll tell you exactly what occurred.

The actor came to our house one morning with, as he said, a most important piece of news for Clement's weekly dramatic column in the *Daily Telegraph*, the one theatrical article in that paper that he was always allowed to sign, just as W. L. Courtney does now with his book reviews.

"My boy, I'm going to sing! I'm going to sing 'Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen' in *The School for Scandal*. Charles Wyndham is to play Charles Surface, so please announce my *début* as a 'chanteur' in to-morrow's paper."

The following Sunday Clement Scott and I went to Surbiton to spend the afternoon with the one-time celebrated actor, John Sleeper Clarke.

Of course every playlover read Clement in the *D. T.*, and to our surprise we were greeted with shouts of derisive laughter by our host.

"You're all wrong, dear chap, you're all wrong," he cried. "Why, Terriss sang 'Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen' with me in the States when I toured with Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. I'll show you the programme." Sure enough he did. There was no getting away from it. Writ in large type were these words:

"SIR HARRY BUMPER . . . with song . . . WILLIAM TERRISS."

On the following Monday night I called at the Adelphi, told William Terriss about J. S. Clarke and the U. S. tour, and demanded an explanation.

Terriss denied the truth of my statement, and wagered a new hat to a pair of gloves that I was wrong.

"Show me the programme, and if it's not a fake, you shall have the best hat that money can buy," he declared.

I wrote to J. S. Clarke, who replied by lending me the theatre bill, which I immediately took to show Terriss.

There was no getting away from it. I had fairly won the bet. He had completely forgotten the fact—so he told me to go and buy myself a hat.

"Where shall I go for it?" I asked.

"Anywhere you like, dear, and send the account in to me," he answered.

"Tell me what colour it is to be, Billy——"

"Oh, don't get a coloured hat. Buy a black one—you know how I love to see a woman in black," he chipped in quickly.

"Black, Billy dear? Oh well, all right, black it shall be. And what's more I'll wear it at your funeral."

Those ominous words spoken so lightly, were, alas, destined to be most cruelly realized.

I did wear that hat at William Terriss's funeral—it happened to be the only black one I had at the moment.

These two letters are written proofs of the deep regard that existed between Terriss and Clement Scott. One is written *to*, the other *of* their friend :

“ On Board the *City of Rome*.

“ October 10th, 1883.

“ MY DEAR OLD CLEM,

“ The heaving of the anchor to the piping of the boatswain’s whistle, the ringing of the big bell to warn all passengers for the shore, are not good accompaniments to bidding an old friend good-bye—but I feel somehow I must send you these few words of brief farewell.

“ Whenever I write to you it is always with mingled feelings of gratitude and affection, for believe me, old man, I never can forget that it was your kind notice of me that first spurred me on to hopes which may yet be fulfilled. I hope it may be my good fortune to return safely, to grasp your hand once more and hear you say, ‘ Hello, what, Breezy Bill back again,’ and to know that when I do come home, all the good things in this life may have fallen to your share.

“ If *sincere* and *heartly* wishes count in this world, then you will indeed be well and wealthy.

“ I send this ashore by the pilot and as he leaves this ship I shall watch him go, knowing he carries with him my last letter to my earliest and my best dramatic friend.

“ Again, dear Clem, thanking you for the many kind words you have spoken of me, and with a firm grip of the hand, I bid you—Farewell.

“ Yours most affectionately,

“ WILL TERRISS.”

This next letter was written the day after Terriss had been murdered. A wire sent by me on the Thursday night told Clement that Will had met with a bad accident, as I knew the shock of his death would be terrible to him. Clement himself was in trouble, and he was alone.



Photo by]

ELLALINE TERRISS.

[*S. Langfier.*

[Facing p. 84

“ Paris.

“ Friday, Dec. 17th, 1897.

“ When I received your wire so late last night I nearly dropped down dead, and this morning I take up a French newspaper to find that our dear beloved old Bill is no more.

“ I don't know what to do or say. The only man in the whole profession who really cared for me—my truest and best pal—gone to his last account without a word of warning! God rest his soul! I must write about him—Ask Le Sage to let me do an appreciation of him—I simply must—poor Billy—I could not have loved him more had he been my own brother.

“ Consult the office, and wire me my orders.

“ C. S.”

A further letter from Edward Lawson is also dated as follows and says :

“ Telegraph station,
Beaconsfield,”
“ Railway Station,
Wooburn Green.”

“ Hall Barn,
Beaconsfield,
Bucks.”
“ December 17th, 1897.

“ But this is too awful about poor Terriss—why, he was only here a week ago—one of the dearest of friends and cheeriest of companions, etc., etc.

“ Yours etc.,

“ EDWARD LAWSON.”

The empty “ hollow ” left by William Terriss still remains one of the very few which has never been refilled. Dramas, so far as the Adelphi was concerned, died with him; nothing could be done with the theatre in this way without him. It had to be practically pulled down, rebuilt, and was eventually taken over first by George Edwardes, who turned it into a house for musical comedy, and later on by Alfred Butt, for “ Song and Show ”

entertainments of a slightly higher grade than the usual Musical Comedy.

WILLIAM TERRISS.

Born February, 1847.

Died December, 1897.

“ ‘ Shadows we are, and shadows we pursue,’
That was the motto, dearest far to you !
Old friend and comrade, having grasped your hand,
I mourn you lost to me in Shadow Land.

“ Brave Sailor Lad ! and best of ‘ pals ’ on earth
Whose triumph at your death, proclaimed your worth,
They bore you down an avenue of woe,
Where men and women sobbed—‘ We loved him so.’

“ Why did they love him ? The assassin’s knife,
With one fell blow, mangled a loyal life.
They loved him for his honour ! Splendid Will !
That made a Hero of our ‘ Breezy Bill ! ’ ”

CLEMENT SCOTT.

January, 1898.

CHAPTER IX

PRACTICAL JOKING IN BOHEMIA

IRVING, Toole, Edward Askew, Sothern, his son Lytton, Burnand, Tom Thorne, and Lal Brough were past masters in the fine art of practical joking.

If you didn't know your "next man" in the hunt, "ware holes" if either of those mischievous fiends happened to be near, for sure as horses are horses you'd be tripped up and thrown.

We had taken a sweetly pretty little place in the heart of the Midlands for our summer holiday where we fondly hoped we should be at peace and undisturbed. We hadn't told a solitary soul where we were going.

However, a few mornings after our move the postman brought us a letter from a friend who informed us that everybody knew exactly where we had hidden ourselves, and asking us to go over the following week and see him, as Toole and Brough were going to spend a few days there.

We couldn't get out of going, so we accepted and made up our minds to look as cheerful as we could in the doleful circumstances.

Not many days later, we were just coming in from the garden to get ready for luncheon when the dogs began to bark loudly, and glancing through the window we saw a couple of dirty, horrible tramps coming up the drive towards the open front door.

I called out to the maid in the dining-room and warned her to be careful how she tackled such ugly customers. Then we stood still and waited.

"Is this where Clement Scott and his missus lives?" asked a raucous voice.

"Yes," replied the bewildered maid.

"Well, you might tell 'em as 'ow two of their pals from the 'work'us' 'ave called to take a snack with 'em."

In another minute the girl was put aside, and they walked in; one wretch threw his arms round me and the other seized Clement Scott's hands and shook them violently.

The maid, paralysed with fright, thought we were murdered at least. I screamed with terror. C. S. couldn't free his hands to help me, and to our surprise, our friend from whom we had received the invitation a short while before strolled leisurely up.

"Do introduce me to your aristocratic visitors," he exclaimed.

Of course we instantly "jumped" as to who our visitors were by that time. Now, would you believe it? Those three had driven about twelve miles to see us, had taken a room at the nearest inn, and Toole and Brough had made themselves up as a couple of "casuals" in this manner.

But their joking didn't end here. *We* were due to pay our *promised* visit in a couple of days' time, and when we arrived at the house were met by Johnnie Toole, who implored us not to say too much as he felt very much afraid he had rather overdone things the evening before.

In the sitting-room we found two most deplorable looking objects crouching over a roaring fire, wrapped in thick blankets. Every second one of them sneezed. Their eyes were pink, their noses red, and they were altogether painful pictures of misery.

Naturally we wanted to know what had happened, and in a hoarse voice one of them croaked out the whole story. They'd all been asked to dine out the evening before, but Johnnie had made an excuse at the last minute, pleaded that he was tired and wanted to go to bed early, *a thing he never did in all his life*—he loathed going to bed

early—we all loathed going to bed early—we *never did go to bed early*. So the others had gone off without him.

Rain started before they reached their destination, and on the homeward journey it pelted down in buckets.

On arriving at the house, our friend put his latchkey in the lock, and found to his dismay that the catch was down.

He shook the door, he knocked, he rang, and presently a window opened from somewhere, and a man demanded to know what anybody wanted at that hour of night.

“Don’t be a fool, Johnnie! Open the door at once. We are soaked through. Be quick, it’s Lal.”

“What d’you mean, Lal? Lal, who?”

“Lal Brough. Do open the door.”

“Lal Brough! Good gracious me! He’s been in bed a long time. Go away, my man, don’t disturb us in this fashion;” and the brute closed the window with a bang.

The poor wretches were dripping with rain. Brough got under some shrubs while the owner of the house, after what seemed to them an age, managed to open one of the back windows, get inside and undo the bolted door.

At this juncture Johnnie made his entrance carrying a lighted candle, but both the men were furious and told Johnnie they didn’t see where the fun came in at all.

“You don’t see where the fun comes in? Oh, my dear boys, if you could only see yourselves as I do!” And the wicked ruffian rolled about on the sofa roaring with laughter.

Those two shivering things over the fire were a perfect scream, and when we left, they were still huddled together, trying to get warmth into their chilled bones.

I call to mind a certain scene when we had assembled at a friend’s house to watch some thanksgiving procession or triumphal march past. The crowd in the street below surged and swayed as one vast body. Every atom of space had been used for standing room.

People were already in a state of expectancy, when

way down a street opposite the window Johnnie Toole's Victoria pulled up and the actor himself alighted.

He stuck his glass in his eye, glared at the mass, got hold of a Bobbie, and engaged him in conversation.

The Bobbie shook his head and intimated that the proposition was hopelessly impossible. Everyone on the look-out knew what Toole wanted. He had been invited to the same friend's house, and didn't know how to get to it through that dense multitude.

Suddenly, after another short confab with Bobbie, who smiled and nodded "yesfully" this time, Toole returned to his carriage. The hood was raised for a moment, and Johnnie emerged again with his hat bashed in, his necktie undone, his collar unfastened, and looking altogether most disreputable.

Irving, also on the watch, appeared to be vastly amused. Toole went once more up to the Bobbie, handed him some money, and the police officer, grinning like a Cheshire cat, took a pair of Darbies from his pocket, and clicked them quickly on to Johnnie's wrists, shouting, "Pick-pocket, pick-pocket; make way there, please; make way there, please."

Instantly there was a yell of execration, and just sufficient room made to get Johnnie across to the other side and up the passage to the house.

Meanwhile, Irving had disappeared from the window, and as Toole arrived at the front door, being hustled along by the policeman, he darted out without being seen by his brother actor, gave the man a fiver, and the Bobbie disappeared.

Irving walked in quietly after Toole, who turned round to have the Darbies removed now that they had done their work, and found to his horror that Mr. Policeman had vanished.

A cry from the street announced the coming of the—well, whatever we were there to see. Johnnie, almost on the verge of tears, got pushed upstairs and into the room by Irving, and there, manacled like a veritable criminal, he had to stand. And what is more, he had to sit down

to luncheon still wearing the Darbies, for no policeman could be found to come along and undo him, and the poor thing utterly refused to go out into the street again and be hooted by the mob.

I believe this harmless bit of fun has been attributed to several actors, but the story really belongs to the Irving and Toole series.

“ Lyceum Theatre,
“ 5th June, 1893.

“ MY DEAR CLEMENT,

“ The list to-day surprised me as much as you. Had I seen it, I should have had many suggestions to make. However, and in any event, you will be there—if I am, old boy.

“ Don't fancy that I am anything but

“ Your old, true friend,
“ H. IRVING.”

Clement Scott, Fanny Brough, Johnnie Toole and I started off to Epping one gloriously warm summer morning, to join a party of Fresh Air Fund children who were going to spend a happy day in the Forest.

Somewhere round about Hoxton, as we were passing a large half-built house, scattered plentifully with workmen, who were hammering, sawing, scraping and making an awful din generally, Toole jumped up in the carriage and “ Hi, Hied ” to the coachman to stop.

The man pulled his horses up, and out got Toole, bawling at the top of his voice for the foreman.

The foreman came running along, and Toole continued to call :

“ Stop your men ! Bring them all here, bring them all here.”

Labourers of all kinds, carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, and the whole lot of them, came hurriedly up to Johnnie, who fumbled about in his pocket and produced a formidable-looking document.

They were always armed with everything needful when it came to the *serious* matter of *practical joking*.

Opening the paper, Toole proceeded to read out the most incomprehensible jargon you ever listened to, interlarded with a legitimate word here and there.

"I have to inform you that ifnity terbite loliton ufemility, then perhaps onfersee merliu wogger you can getergog oblipop tunituppe, must be finished eryong davlish four o'clock."

The foreman took off his cap and looked dazed at Johnnie. *It sounded like English*, yet he could scarcely understand a word of it. That idiotic patter has deceived many an ear.

Burnand drove Joe Parkinson to an aurist through it, as he felt certain he must be going deaf, not hearing the words distinctly.

Johnnie repeated the message, but with a much more definite wind-up, to the effect that the house had to be ready by four o'clock the following day by Royal command, as the people were coming into it.

"Four o'clock to-morrow, sir! But there's a good three months' hard work; we couldn't do it, sir."

"Well, please yourself, those are the Royal commands. *I've read them out. You heard them, you grasp their meaning*—and if you don't carry out the instructions, you'll all probably be sent to the Tower for life."

That fool got those poor wretches arguing as to who they could get in to help them, how much one could do, and the time it would take to get this dry before painting, and so on and so on, until they were all in such a state of fear and trembling, that we couldn't stand it any longer. Fanny Brough nearly choked, and Toole, seeing the game was up, dived into his pockets, brought out handfuls of small change, and flung it amongst the men, who started scrambling for it.

"Come to Toole's Theatre, and I'll let you all in free if you give the right password—*Where's the man who told us to build a house in twelve hours?*"

Toole stepped back, and off we drove, amidst cheers and shouts of, "Why, it's Toole, it's old Toole."

“ Imperial Hotel,

“ Cork,

“ Tuesday, October 9th, '81.

“ MY DEAR CLEM,

“ How are you—jolly and well, I hope.

“ I think the time has now arrived when a sweet little paragraph in the *D. T.* about your old particular favourite low comedian will be acceptable to the London public, don't *you*? Think so? Well, all right—I thought you would—now—*how is it to be done*?

“ I fancy you might use your influence with a nice *thick* pen.

“ Your old favourite, J. L. T., has had a wonderful tour up to now, the very best he has ever had.

“ Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Dublin, Plymouth, etc., etc., all big—

“ Great receptions every night up here particularly.

“ After here, I've a broken week—Birkenhead, Wrexham, Shrewsbury, Blackburn, then Glasgow and Edinburgh.

“ Why not come to Edinburgh for the week—October 29th, and stay with me? I'll wake you up. They give me a Banquet there at the Pen and Pencil Club—suit you down to the ground—you can write all over the table-cloths and make a speech, too, if you like.

“ Lots of Toddy—Delightful drives—Fish Dinners, oysters every night—do come and let's have a jolly good time.

“ With love,

“ Affectionately yours,

“ J. L. TOOLE.”

At luncheon at Tom Thorne's, in the St. John's Wood Road, several congenial souls were in the midst of a very nice meal, when attention was drawn to an awful noise that seemed to be going on in the hall.

Voices were raised, swear words floating towards us; somebody evidently wanted to see Thorne, and insisted on doing so.

"But I tell you this is the third morning I've driven him home at four o'clock, and he hasn't paid me a single bob. He said he'd give me the —— money if I called now, and I'm not agoing to be put off again. If I can't get my money, then I'm going to take 'im to Bow Street; that's what I'm going to do; and if he's 'aving his food, he can bring it along with him and finish it in my cab, or else give me my fare—a'cheating of honest men what's got to earn their living, and 'e can sit at 'is table and fill his basement up with entries and wotnots."

Thorne went green, begged to be excused for a second, and left the luncheon table to see what all the palaver was about.

Then a regular shouting match went on. Thorne declaring he didn't owe the cabman a farthing, and the cabman assuring him that he didn't know how to speak the truth.

To settle the difference, Thorne hailed a policeman who was lurking just inside the gateway, but Bobbie took the cabman's side, joined him on the front doorstep, and insisted that Thorne should either pay or be taken to Bow Street.

"Well, if you've got no mind to make up, let your friends decide for you," argued the cabman, and before Thorne could stop him, the man, whip and all, followed by the officer, burst into the dining-room, and with a wild shriek, they sang out:

"Hello! There you all are!" and tearing off their wigs, disclosed themselves as Toole and Lewis Wingfield, another "shining light" belonging to the practical joker gang.

"Theatre Royal,

"Haymarket,

"DEAR SCOTT,

"London.

"I know Wingfield and like him much.

"I will be only too glad to give him any possible hint—and more than this—introduce him to the proper set.

* * * * *

" We produce *Home* on Saturday, January 30th.

" What would you like, or do you care to see the old piece again or not? And then there's Rae's little comedietta, and also my son Lytton's first appearance as 'Bertie,' in *Home*.

" Will you and Wingfield come, and do an early 4.30 o'clock feed at the Midland Hotel, St. Pancras, some day next week? If you can spare time—like a trump—name your own date and hour.

" Yours very always,

" E. A. SOTHERN.

" Give my dear boy a lift if you can."

" December 3rd.

" DEAR SCOTT,

" Yours received.

" I will cuddle anyone in White Satin or out of it—at a price!

" I have written to Vezin asking him to dine here on Sunday next at six o'clock.

" We shall be in all day, so come early—as early as you can.

" Many thanks for thinking about me.

" Yours sincerely,

" LYTTON SOTHERN."

Ages before we arrived at his house in Maida Vale one afternoon, having been invited by Toole to a garden-party there, we knew something "extra special" must be going on, for the large crowd which generally gathered around when "theatricals" were to be seen, kept pointing and waving, to the accompaniment of a merry chorus of:

" Oh, look, my word! Did you ever? No, up there, round the side, on the wall," and such like.

When at last we reached the gate leading to the tessellated path up to the house, you never saw anything more mad than that place looked.

On every tree, every bush and every shrub, hung

cucumbers, vegetable marrows, turnips, carrots, lemons or bananas, and the ivy on the walls of the house was literally smothered with melons, pine-apples, tomatoes and oranges.

The garden proper presented quite as crazy a sight. Fir trees were brilliant with cherries and peaches; nectarines hung on rose bushes, grapes and apples adorned laurels, and fruit clustered thickly about lilacs, tall palms and evergreens of every description.

It looked as though all the market carts on their way to Covent Garden had stopped and dumped down their loads at that house. What it must have cost, and the time it must have taken to make such an elaborate preparation, it is impossible to say.

Even the weather must have been kinder in those days; it never seemed to rain and spoil sport.

If the mood took him that way, Toole would walk into an ironmonger's shop as gravely as a judge, and if he found some young fellow alone in the place, would perhaps lean over the counter and ask, with the most exquisite politeness :

"Have you the complete works of Charles Dickens? You know what I mean—the new edition?"

Of course the man would stare at him blankly.

"I hope I make myself quite clear? Of course it must include 'Pickwick'—that's the best of the lot, isn't it?"

"I don't understand—I—er——"

"You don't understand 'Pickwick.' What a pity! Study him, young man, or you'll come to a bad end."

"Don't you see for yourself that this is an ironmonger's shop?"

"Well, if you haven't a set of Dickens, what about Thackeray, some think he's even better than Dickens. Yes, give me a complete set of Thackeray with 'Vanity Fair'; of course with 'Vanity Fair.'"

"I don't know——"

"What, don't know 'Vanity Fair' either? But this is real ignorance on your part! And you a bookseller,

too! A bookseller! A bookseller who doesn't know 'Pickwick,' and has never heard of 'Vanity Fair.' "

By this time the fellow would have lost his temper, and as he started to shout, so Toole would shout louder, until the noise became deafening, and the principal would appear on the scene.

"Excuse me, sir, are you not being properly attended to?"

"Attended to! I should think not."

"May I ask what it is you require, sir?"

"Just an ordinary little sixpenny file, that's all. Not a very difficult customer to serve, am I? Thank you, that's exactly what I want. Good morning," and away he'd go. You were lucky if you could keep from exploding until you got into the streets.

One night I never shall forget. We had been to the Gaiety Theatre, and to the "Savoy" afterwards for supper.

The telegraph office at Charing Cross had not been reconstructed then; you could see through the windows in places from the street, and of course you could send messages all night through to anywhere.

I don't remember who suggested a wire. Anyway, we pulled up, somebody jumped out, and we waited.

A few minutes later, back came whoever got out, grumbling horribly because only one wretched boy had been left in charge. Even he was half asleep, and the service voted altogether a disgrace.

Johnnie's eyes danced with fun. The night being early, he was just beginning to get lively.

"Here, stop a moment, I'll wake him up. Come on in, all of you."

In we went. Johnnie made a dash for a colonial form, roaring and grunting as if he were in an awful hurry, and his wire of the very greatest importance.

He wrote out his cablegram, took out three or four sovereigns, went up to the astounded boy, planked down his money and told him to send the thing off at once.

"Remember, if that doesn't reach Australia before the

morning, all London will be blown to atoms. Quick, now, all of you, or we shall miss the last train."

With that he hustled us outside.

"Now then, watch him."

The boy took the form leisurely and started to count the money. Then he looked at the words. Then he began to rub his eyes, he pushed his hand through his hair, he put both elbows on to the counter and fixed his gaze on to that wire. *NOT ONE SINGLE SYLLABLE COULD HE MAKE OUT*—

He turned the paper sideways, *all ways*, but it couldn't be done.

In despair he blew up the pipe. In a few seconds another half-awake man ambled through the door from the back of the office, and the pair of them then started to decipher this terrible writing.

The newcomer threw up the job immediately, and they whistled up the pipe to somebody else.

An elderly man answered this time. He glanced at the two younger men disdainfully, and took up the form as much as to say: "Idiots, fancy having to call me down for this child's play."

The venerable one, with an indescribable air of superiority, seized the paper with the intention of reading the message off quickly and flinging it at the heads of the unfledged ignoramuses, but he stuck at the first go off.

We, peering through the window, didn't know how to contain our screams; it was too, too funny!

Old Wiseacre held the beastly piece of writing up to the light, he stood it before a mirror, every dodge only made him more and more angry.

He took up a piece of the gold, he bit it—it was good! And there we left them, seated on stools, and all three poring over that bogus telegram made up of "Johnnie's Jargon" and utterly unreadable to anybody.

Think of the money some of those jokes cost! But they didn't care; it was happiness, real happiness and fun they were out for, and whatever the price, they were prepared to pay for it.

CHAPTER X

DOUBLES

NOTHING infuriated Henry Irving more than being imitated. It attacked his nerves to such an extent that it almost drove him mad. If he heard that in any theatre somebody had dared to include his illustrious person in their list of reproductions, he'd strive his level best to stop them from continuing in their "evil" ways.

I have a letter before me now, written by Irving to Fred Leslie, in which the actor-manager takes exception to being caricatured.

"DEAR MR. LESLIE,

"I see that in your new burlesque I am put by you into woman's clothes, and I hope that you will at once withdraw such an exhibition.

"Whether or not you are doing this thing by your manager's desire, I cannot tell, but it seems to me that no consideration should tempt an artist to such an act.

"Very truly yours,

"HENRY IRVING."

"To Fred Leslie, Esq."

To this Leslie replied :

"I am willing to withdraw the personation, but powerless to do so unless ordered by the manager," with whom he respectfully suggested that Irving should communicate.

However, as a matter of fact, I believe the tragedian's scene did get cut out a few days later.

Irving's letter suggesting "woman's clothes," set everybody giggling, inasmuch as the female attire consisted of an extremely limited costume—nothing in front, very little behind and no sleeves, or some butterfly, gauzy, flimsy-wimsy ones made of ethereal tulle.

The Irving imitation occurred in the celebrated *pas de quatre*, the *quatre* being made up of Leslie, Danby, the long-legged Fred Storey and Nathan, who impersonated respectively Irving, Toole, Barrett and Arthur Roberts.

I don't know why Irving should have been so particularly wild at being put into petticoats and burlesqued—he'd played in them himself in his younger days, just as Charles Wyndham did, and a good many others.

Even John Hare played Zerlina in H. J. Byron's burlesque, *Little Don Giovanni*, the last of the burlesques under Marie Wilton's régime at the Prince of Wales' Theatre. Marie Wilton, now Lady Bancroft, played the Don to Hare's short petticoated heroine.

Let me quote you a letter from Lal Brough, written evidently in answer to an inquiry made by Clement Scott concerning this very question.

" Percy Villa,
" South Lambeth.

" MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

" The burlesque was called *Paris* or *Vive L'Empereur*, by F. C. Burnand. Thus was he starred out on the play bills: 'CEnone—a *Sheperdess* married to Mr. Alexander, mentioned below by us, and by the Gods above—*Mr. Henry Irving*.' So it reads in the Liverpool Prince of Wales's Cast.

" Lydia Thompson played 'Paris' or 'Alexander,' the little chairman of the 'Irregular Rips,' and Saker and self the twins 'Castor and Pollux.'

" Yours always,
" LAL BROUGH."

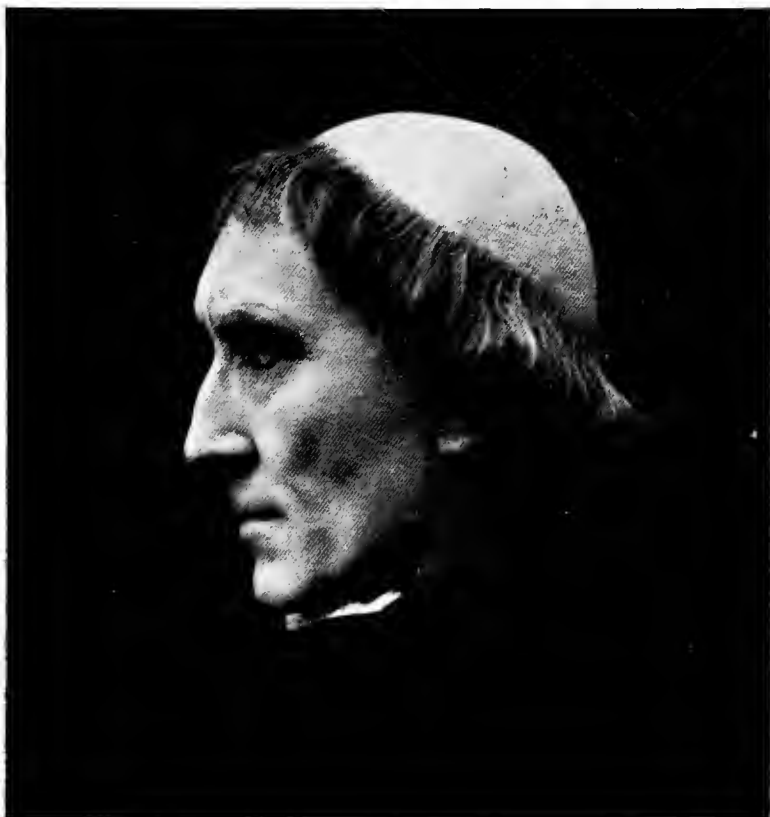


Photo by]

[Window & Grove.

"Then are God's trees and Women
are God's flowers."
Becket.

Henry Irving: 1895.

HENRY IRVING

[Facing p. 100.

The same kind of trouble arose with Irving when Henry Dixey came to the Gaiety from America, to play in a medley called *Adonis*, only Dixey refused to have his imitation stopped, and continued walking up the stage with a bucket, filling it from a pump, bringing it back and planting it bang centre, with the Irving strut and moaning grunt copied to the life . . . until he left England.

By the way, Dixey had a very poor opinion of English intelligence, and when he returned to his own country told the people there that he felt like ringing a bell every time a joke was made, just to let us know when to laugh.

But to come back to Irving and his imitators. In 1893 Clement Scott and I arrived at the Golden Gate of San Francisco, California, and here we stayed at one of the most gigantic and marvellous hotels I have ever known.

This "Palace"—and a veritable palace it was—Hotel stood about sixteen or eighteen stories high—perhaps more, I don't remember; I only recall that looking over one of the balconies on a high floor, you couldn't possibly distinguish one person from the other.

They all looked like so many same-sized dots scattered about the courtyard below.

The earthquake demolished this gigantic Palace Hotel, and now I believe an even taller hostelry stands in its place.

We occupied an outside and an inside apartment—the one to keep ourselves from freezing, the other to save us from being roasted alive. Talk about blowing hot and cold! Well, it did everything like this simultaneously at the Palace Hotel, San Francisco.

What a huge piece of machinery! What vast engines—always at work, day in, night out, work, work, work! Everybody rushing here, there and anywhere—one thundering wave of roaring humanity! No dawdling, no tarrying—all bustle, lightning speed and hot haste.

From the vestibule doors you were whizzed up to the registration counter; from there you got pushed along to the reception office, where you were asked:

"American or European Plan?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"American or European Plan?" the lady clerk would repeat in the same monotonous tone of voice, and without any further explanation.

"Which is the better?"

"It's up to you."

"American, please."

"No. 7,000000000000000000005 American."

Not a whiff of breath wasted! Everything machine-made, and ticking as evenly as a pendulum.

On we went, guided by a coloured boy to the elevators. Again no dawdling. Up we went, and got shot to the top before we knew we had started from the bottom.

We didn't express fear, but each of us—well, you know that sort of nervous "clear-your-throat" feeling you get when it's all over? That's how we felt at that moment—at least, I'm sure I did.

After dinner, what more natural than a theatre? But which? Why, Ned Sothern, the son of "Dundreary Sothern," Clement Scott's friend of long ago, was in the town. We'd go to see him. So off we started.

When the curtain rose on the second act, we caught a glimpse of a delightful bit of an English garden, and on one of those seats such as Marcus Stone loves to wind round his apple trees, sat an old man playing the zither.

The picture in itself looked charming. The appearance of that elderly man fairly startled me, and I cried aloud:

"Why, it's Irving."

The man spoke. The voice resembled Irving's, but the diction sounded vastly superior.

As soon as the curtain fell, an impish-eyed black boy put his head round the curtain—a good many of the boxes in American theatres have heavy portières instead of doors—and asked:

"Missa Lemon Scott."

We were getting quite bright, for we understand at once and nodded. A letter had been sent round to Clement Scott by someone from behind the scenes.

“ Thursday Evening.

“ MY DEAR KIND FRIEND,

“ My heart almost stopped beating to-night when I caught sight of your face in front. Will you do me a great favour, and honour me by coming to my little restaurant for supper after the show. I can meet you at the door on your way out, if you will say the word, as I am not on at the end of the play, and will miss any call to see you. Do come.

“ Ever, old man,
“ FLOCKIE.”

We looked at one another. I felt sure Clement Scott wanted to see “ Flockie,” so the answer that went back said, “ With very great pleasure.”

The play didn't interest us at all. We thought Ned Sothorn extraordinarily conceited, and we were neither of us sorry when the moment came to go.

Outside we found “ Flockie ” waiting for us. He carried the sweet-toned zither, placed in its case, in his hand.

The likeness to Irving was even more pronounced off the stage than on, and I could scarcely take my eyes from his face.

The mouth, with that long, tight, thin upper lip, seemed identical ; the overhanging brows, the squarish chin, and, above all, the expression—it was absolutely uncanny.

In a quiet street, away from the eternal clang-clang of the cable cars and their everlasting bells, we turned into a tiny doorway, dipped down two steps, and found ourselves in a room very much after the pattern of Voisin's in Paris.

A corner table had already been booked, and over an extremely well-served supper I heard the tale of dear old Charles Flockton and his exile in California.

The same, same story. His likeness to Irving had been his ruin. No matter what part he played, some kind person would comment on the flagrant manner in which he imitated Irving.

This would invariably be brought to Irving's notice, and violent letters of protest were immediately sent to managers, who at last got tired of giving Flockton engagements—as they didn't want to be pestered with Irving's angry remonstrances. So, finally, in preference to starving in his own country, Charles Flockton sailed for America, where he lived for years and years alone, and all because he had the terrible misfortune to be Henry Irving's "DOUBLE."

After supper that night I begged Mr. Flockton to play once more the lovely melody he had done in the theatre that evening. The restaurant was one of the many never-closing places; it hadn't been shut for years. There are plenty of them in America, and still more in Italy.

Everyone else had departed; we had the whole room to ourselves, and for quite an hour Charles Flockton kept us entranced by the exquisite tones he managed to get out of that tiny instrument.

Then he said he'd guarantee to teach me how to play the zither in three or four lessons, and we parted, Clement Scott and I having arranged to meet him at a certain large music-seller's the next morning.

And now comes a painful episode.

Punctual to the stroke agreed upon we three met, for the purpose of buying an inexpensive zither, to see whether I liked it or not.

As we went into the shop—Mr. Flockton opened the door to let me in—a beggar asked alms from Clement Scott.

There was a piercingly cold wind blowing, and I suggested to C. S. that he should come inside while he searched for the coin he wanted to give the man.

"I suppose I shall have to tell you who I am," said the ragged-looking individual. "I can see from your manner that you'd never guess. I know you, Clement Scott . . . but then you're not changed as I am. You did know me once, when I had a theatre, and a fortune, and hadn't ruined myself for a woman. I'm Leslie—H. J. Leslie—'Jack.' You recollect me now, don't you?"

Clement Scott looked at the man, and then took hold of the thin, emaciated hand.

What a terrible wreck of the at one time handsome "Jack" Leslie—the adored of so many women in the days of his success, when he was running *Dorothy*, over which he made a huge fortune, and *The Red Hussar*.

The contrast from the immaculately-groomed and well-dressed "Jack" Leslie to this wretchedly down-at-heel, hungry and disreputably-clothed object was too pitiful.

Needless to say, C. S. did his best to help the poor fellow, and tried hard to get him a job, but disease had already settled Leslie's career, and he died not many months afterwards—I think of double pneumonia, brought about by semi-starvation and rough treatment.

I don't believe anything could have saved him. His health had been thoroughly undermined; there was no vitality left in him—in fact, I don't think he cared to live. But I am sure he felt glad to have met Clement Scott that morning.

What became of Charles Flockton I don't know. We wrote to him every now and again when we returned to England, and then somehow the lengths between the letters grew longer and longer, until we ceased to measure them altogether. He may be alive still, for aught I know.

In their book, "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage," the actor and actress relate some weird adventures with their doubles, who not only resembled them perfectly in appearance, but also bore their name—"Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft."

They were never angry, though, and, on the whole, more amused than concerned by such a peculiar coincidence.

Wilson Barrett's double was so exact a facsimile that he often used to get the applause on his first entrance which Wilson ought to have had. But W. B. didn't care a straw for the chance resemblance, and kept the man as a member of his company for years, and the fellow, in return, adored his chief.

I can remember when the actor—Hudson, I think, was the name—had a serious illness, and Barrett, ever charit-

able and good, sent him first to a nursing home and afterwards paid his passage to Australia and back.

What a difference in the temperament of Wilson Barrett and Henry Irving !

Clement Scott's double led to some excruciatingly funny scenes.

Personally, I could never see the likeness, but it must have been very marked, for over and over again I have been with C. S., and strangers have exclaimed : " Hello ! how are you Dr. — ? "

On one occasion we were dining at the " Savoy," and Clement Scott got up to shake hands with Michael Gunn, or D'Oyly Carte, I forget which, and I heard someone at the next table say very audibly :

" I say, there's Dr. — " mentioning the name of a well-known specialist. " I wonder who the woman is he's with ? It's not his wife."

Of course, I roared with laughter when telling Clement Scott about it, but he wasn't a bit pleased.

But the most amusing incident happened at either the Alhambra or the Empire one night. Clement was on his way to his box to join me and several others, when a bright-eyed young damsel almost leapt into his arms, declaring she hadn't seen him for ever so long, and expressing her delight in a highly demonstrative form.

" I'm afraid you have made a mistake," argued Clement Scott in his most dulcet tones, always desirous of making himself agreeable to a pretty woman.

" Mistake, rubbish ! " replied the lady. " Why, didn't you take me for the day to Staines ? And didn't you dine me at the ' Swan ' ? Oh, come off it, dearie—as if I don't know you're——"

" Indeed, I'm not ; my name is Clement Scott," responded C. S.

" Good gracious ! Are you really, dearie ? Oh, well, what's the odds ? It don't matter, anyway. I'd just as soon as be made love to by a pen as a stethoscope," answered the girl smilingly and unabashed.

Quite a witty and clever reply, wasn't it ?

CHAPTER XI

THE LABOUCHERES

NUMBER 5, Old Palace Yard, Westminster, a delightful residence standing within a stone's-throw from the Abbey, and rented by the Labouchères, acquired a reputation while occupied by them for being a home of curiously practical philanthropy, grave inconsistency and startlingly erratic temperament.

Mrs. "Labby," famous as Labouchere's wife, and not nearly so interesting as Henrietta Hudson, the actress, contracted a fancy for weird and whimsical gatherings, and at her house in London all sorts and conditions congregated to discuss each other, and, as a rule, to tear one another to shreds. If you entered with a character, you emerged without it.

It was a modern "School for Scandal," only much wittier and more cynical. Besides this, it had the charm of sensational attractiveness, for you never knew precisely where the conversation would burst forth next with some volcanic "personalism," which had the effect of doubling the whole crowd up with derisive laughter.

Major and minor movements suddenly clanged together with a most appalling crash, stirring every pulse in your body with apprehension, until you became alternately hot, cold and clammy with nervousness.

Mrs. "Labby" frequently proposed herself for luncheon or tea in "The Pretty Green House with the Painted Windows," and her prodigality in information relating to her dearest friends fairly made your hair stand on end.

In the early nineties not many private houses were

installed with electric light, and our modest, recently appointed dwelling happened to be fitted with it.

Our first visit to America had made us ahead in our views, and we were a little in advance of this sag-behind country.

Mrs. "Labby" had come to spend an hour for a chat about her *friends*. Tea had just been brought into the room, and immediately the lights were switched up, she commenced asking questions as to the value and the merits of the, to her, practically new invention.

"It sounds easy, but don't you ever have any difficulty with it?" she asked.

"Never," I replied emphatically. "It is so clean and bright, it burns so steadily, and it's always there on the instant."

"But I am told it is not reliable, and has a habit of going out suddenly. Doesn't yours?"

"Never," I repeated even more decidedly, *and on the word every light in the room went out and we were plunged in blackness.*

"I'll stick to gas," murmured Mrs. Labouchere quietly. "Labby has such a mischievous mind, and it travels more quickly in the dark."

Pope's Villa, Twickenham, the riverside summer-house of Mr. and Mrs. Labouchère, recalls days of delicious idleness and visions of exquisite beauty never to be forgotten.

What thousands were spent on the luxurious Shakespearean open-air performances given in the grounds opposite the villa which still stands on the sloping borders of old Father Thames!

During the War the Government commandeered it for the women's motor transport work.

"5, Old Palace Yard, S.W.

"*Thursday.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Will you and Clement have luncheon with us next Sunday at Twickenham? Irving and Johnnie are

coming down in the afternoon, but earlier there will be only Labby and myself, and we can have a nice talk together. I showed ——'s letter to Labby—he says you are not to take any notice of it, that we are all more or less mad, but that —— is the maddest person he has ever known this side of a lunatic asylum. I return you the sweet missive with his instructions. 'Destroy it! Forget it!' She will be sorry she has written so foolishly, and even now I hear that retribution has overtaken her.

"Don't fail us on Sunday. We shall be so disappointed if you can't come.

"Yours ever,

"HENRIETTA LABOUCHERE."

We did not fail the Laboucheres that Sunday, but unfortunately the river had a most unpleasant manner of flowing over the garden, and when we arrived in time for luncheon, half of the "comodious abode" reposed under water, and the bulk of the food had journeyed towards Teddington Lock.

It was fearfully exciting living by the Thames in those days, when meals were so restless in their movements. Not that I suppose the river has changed its tides, but we're not there to watch them.

A hallowed memory is of one of the most perfect evenings in July, when invitations were accepted for an entrancingly realistic production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Surely no setting for this romantic comedy has ever been more appropriately improvised.

Even now when I recall the scene I hear the "murmuring of innumerable bees," as they hummed in and out the bed of drowsy flowers. I see the great feathery gold-and-white Marguerite daisies, the giant slippers of orange and amber calceolarias, the clusters of mignonette, the tall blooms of stately white lilies, the geraniums, from the proudest scarlet to the daintiest pink, the hedges of flame-coloured azaleas, the banks of soft green fern—all dotted here and there under clumps of towering trees. And moving across and about the well-trimmed lawns,

like fireflies in tropical countries, I catch the glitter of countless jewels, the gentle flutter of silken cloaks. I hear the sound of merry laughter, and—yes, 'tis true—I even trace the scent of a delicious and well-flavoured cigar.

Then the play begins, and chief amidst the performers there stands out the childish little figure of auburn-haired Rose Norreys as the fairy sprite Puck. I doubt if any actress has entered more fully into the character, or understood it better than this enchanting young artist, destined, poor soul, to drag out the long years of her life in the seclusion of 'Bedlam' Asylum.

What a picture it all made as we lingered beneath that dazzling canopy of an almost Southern sky, twinkling with numberless stars and radiant with the silver searchlight of the clear white Fisherman's moon.

What a night, what a glorious, bewildering night !

Mrs. Labby's "afternoons" in London were always amusing. We were such a happy-go-lucky cosmopolitan crowd. No formalities. Take me, or leave me, as you please, and if you didn't know your neighbour, introduce yourself and get acquainted quickly.

On one of these jolly days, almost the first of the many I went to, a large number had crammed in to hear a new singer ; it was part of Mrs. Labby's philanthropy to push hitherto unknown musicians, or any talented youngsters, well up the course to the winning-post. I had picked out a quiet corner for myself near the temporary platform so that I might thoroughly enjoy the treat. Mrs. Labby never introduced a failure ; her finds were always of the best.

To my intense disgust a most impertinent man planted himself beside me, and commenced, in loud tones, to slang Mrs. Labouchere and her boring parties.

He took exception to her taste in the choice of friends, he declared he didn't know why, in the name of everything disagreeable, she could possibly inflict people with such tedious nonsense.

At that moment the handsome novice mounted the

steps and prepared to sing. A heavy fusilade of objectionable adjectives poured forth from my noisy companion, who apparently took a diabolical delight in my terrified, crumpled condition.

Now for it, I thought, as I saw Mrs. Labouchere swooping down on us. This is the last time I shall ever be asked here. Think how I felt when I heard her say to the man by my side :

"Shut, up Labby ; do be quiet and behave yourself properly !" Then taking pity on my scared face she whispered : "Come over here ; he's a positive brute to tease you so. But he just wallows in mischief, especially when he has a good subject, and, my dear, you're about the limit."

Although I had known Mrs. Labby some while, I had not met Labby, and he never gave me the chance to get one back on him for playing me such a mean trick.

The girl, whose wondrous voice filled the great music-room with such amazing volume of sound, was none other than our own and much-loved CLARA BUTT.

Some of the most interesting journalistic work we ever had to do is associated with *Truth*.

At the time there was a general outcry against the rotten state of certain places in London. Houses were being raided, music-hall promenades were being attacked and a big fight had been put up by a Puritan crowd to clear the vast metropolis of "damaging and damaged goods."

Clement Scott's articles, named "London Night by Night," were attracting a great deal of attention. One particularly well-known gang of men and women moving about in swell restaurants and theatres was being shadowed by the police. Most of these people posed as swagger dressmakers and milliners.

Then came the terrific war, waged by Mrs. Ormiston Chant, against the Empire Variety Hall, under the management of George Edwardes. George, his blue eyes blazing fire, tore up in a raging fury to Clement Scott and begged his assistance. The following morning there

appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* the now celebrated and oft-quoted reply to Mrs. Chant's attack headed, "PRUDES ON THE PROWL," written by C. S.

Strongly in favour of the Continental custom of licensed houses, and having urged so frequently that this should obtain in England, Clement Scott furthermore argued that there should be some recognized quarter for such traffic, under the control of the police and medical supervision; that this would keep the streets clean, and public places clear.

If, however, houses of this description were not to be permitted, and music-hall promenades were to be closed down, etc., then things would become absolutely impossible in some thoroughfares and districts.

Well, you have only to walk, or try to walk, along Piccadilly, Coventry Street, Leicester Square, etc., from early afternoon until any hour of night, to know that he was right, and that he knew what he was talking about.

A congratulatory letter received from "Labby" by Clement Scott, on his sixtieth birthday, is characteristic of the man, and shows that although C. S. had ceased writing for *Truth* years before, he was still held in affectionate remembrance by its proprietor:

"Cadenabbia,

September 18th, 1901.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

"As I have always regarded myself as old enough to be your father, it makes me feel very venerable to see in a newspaper that you will be sixty next month.

"The world at large cannot complain that you have been idle, for I hardly remember the time when you were not a guide, philosopher and friend of playgoers, and the best proof that you have been a valuable critic is that you have often been attacked by authors, managers and fellow-critics—*genus irritabile*.

"I trust that you may long enjoy this evidence of your independence of judgment.

“When all praise you, this will be proof positive that there is something wrong.

“With regards to Mrs. Scott,

“Believe me, yours,

“H. LABOUCHERE.”

Mrs. Labouchere was the wife of a Mr. Pigeon. She ran away with “Labby,” and eventually the divorce law freed her, and she married the shrewd and brilliant founder of *Truth*.

It seems an odd thing to say, but although Mrs. Labby had seen so much of the world, nobody could be more bitter about any poor unfortunate who had overstepped the boundary line, and wanted to return to the set she had thrown aside for “dear love’s sake.” She was pitiless in her condemnation of such weakness, and showed no mercy. When she found happiness as a convert to the Catholic Faith her nature changed entirely. She became human, kind and charitable.

I knew Mrs. Labby before she went over to the Church of Rome, and liked her. I knew her afterwards—and loved her.

CHAPTER XII

ELLEN TERRY

IN fancy, Ellen Terry must have been the love-dream of many men of susceptibility and poetical imagination, for in her days of girlhood she was distinctly the most romantic-looking creature ever seen.

I think that when Ellen Terry first appeared at the Haymarket, a more enchanting, ideal being it would be impossible to conceive. She suggested the visionary heroines that we most adored in poetry and fine art generally. She was "Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable, Elaine the Lily Maid of Astolat." She was Vivian with her mad girlish pranks, and most of our favourite queens in verse were made realities by Ellen Terry.

I wish I could paint with pen an even vague suggestion of this exquisitely lovely personality—tall, fair, willowy, with hair like spun gold, a faultless complexion, the very poetry of movement. She had a wonderful deep-toned voice, with a heart-throb in it that started involuntary tears to coldest eyes.

What wonder that when painters and poets saw Ellen Terry play Hero they raved about her?

We were in what might be called the second Pre-Raphaelite stage; Millais, Holman Hunt, Madox Brown, Charles Collins and their companions belonged to a former age. Our enthusiasms were now devoted to the Dante Gabriel Rossetti set, of which Arthur Hughes, Frederick Sandys and others were prominent members.

The text-book in art which we followed was a weekly



By permission, from a photo by Fredk. Holtger after the picture by G. F. Watts, R.A.

OPHELIA
(Ellen Terry).

[Facing p. 114.

illustrated periodical, *Once a Week*, that cultivated what may be called modern medievalism, and Ellen Terry's face could be seen on every page. Small wonder that she should appeal to men and women of brain and culture. Ellen Terry at that time was the most eerie, unreal thing to look at that I ever beheld.

When she had done suggesting Tennyson, and Browning, and William Morris, this mysterious spirit fled with our imaginations to fairyland and became Undine, or the idol of Sintram and his companions and the Shadowless Man.

Of this particular painter circle, Arthur Lewis, the future brother-in-law of Ellen, was a kind of art patron, and his bachelor banquets to artists and musicians were very memorable functions. George du Maurier, who had just commenced his brilliant career on *Punch*, *Once a Week* and the *Cornhill Magazine*, first distinguished himself as a singer and *raconteur* at this well-remembered *salon* at Moray Lodge, Campden Hill.

Cleverness and comeliness seem to be clustered in theatrical families. There are several striking examples of hereditary beauty and talent combined, but they all pale before the Terrys.

Kate, with her lovely figure and sweet face; Ellen, with her altogether indescribable charm; Marion, with a something in her, far, far deeper, more tender and more feminine than either of them; Florence, who became lovelier as a woman than as a girl, and the brothers Fred and Charles, both splendid specimens of the athletic Englishman, the former being one of the best romantic actors ever seen on the English stage.

At the moment I write of we were all mad about blue china, Chippendale chairs, Sheraton sideboards, old spinets and brass fire-irons.

George du Maurier, with his *Punch* pictures, had set the fashion, and everyone in the artistic world started to ransack their belongings and revert to the modes and whims of their great-grandmothers.

Bric-à-brac shops were turned inside out for last-century

clocks, china and furniture, and women appeared wearing mob caps, fichus and frills like their ancestors.

The age was exactly ripe for *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and John Hare, with his keen instinct, pictured in his mind's eye a most perfect "Olivia" in Ellen Terry.

John Hare was right.

With faultless judgment he and William G. Wills gave an absolutely faithful reproduction of one of the most graceful and picturesque periods of old England—Old England, with its pink-and-white apple-blossoms, yellow daffodils and bluebells. Simplicity had not then been destroyed by steam, smoke and petrol; it was the England that John Ruskin wrote about, the England that poets and painters loved.

Fate willed it that this same enchanting "Olivia" should be the stepping-stone in the career of Ellen Terry.

They came to see her. We saw and applauded. She conquered everybody.

Dramatic history will have to decide how much of Henry Irving's success was due to the extraordinary influence, charm and magnetism of Ellen Terry.

I am certain of one thing—that a more loyal comrade no actor-manager ever had.

I have sometimes thought that when it was decreed from the Lyceum throne that Ellen Terry was to play Lady Macbeth to the "Master's" Macbeth, and Queen Catherine to his Cardinal Wolsey, and various other characters outside the peculiar temperament of the actress, that during the long Lyceum reign she might have been allowed to play Rosalind, the one of all Shakespeare's heroines whose nature was so absolutely incarnated in herself.

I can recall a most interesting conversation we had together on this subject soon after the revival at the Lyceum, when Ellen Terry succeeded to Lady Macbeth in place of Miss Bateman, and I remember her saying, in her generous, emphatic way :

"You have hit the blot, 'an empty barren cry.' When I called on the Spirits to unsex me, I acted that bit just as badly as anybody could act anything. You know it

was most kind of you to suppose that I could act Lady Macbeth. You wrote from that point of view which in itself is a very great compliment. For my own part I am quite surprised to find I am *really* a useful actress. For I really am."

Of course, I laughed at the idea that anybody in the wide world could urge that she was not.

"Well," said Ellen Terry, with justifiable sarcasm, "I have been able to get through with such parts as Ophelia, Olivia, Beatrice, Margaret and Lady Macbeth, and my aim is usefulness to my lovely art and to Henry Irving. This is not a very high ambition, is it? But long ago I gave up dreaming, and I think I see things as they are—especially see myself as I am, alas!—both on and off the stage, and I only aspire to help a little."

"Most women," she went on, "break the law during their lives; few women realize the consequences of what they do to-day."

Again the earnest artist returned to her reading of the character of Lady Macbeth.

"I do believe that at the end of that banquet the poor wretched creature was brought through agony and sin to repentance, and was forgiven. Surely she called upon the Spirits to be made bad because she knew she was not so very bad?"

"But was Lady Macbeth good?" I questioned.

"No, she was not good, but not so much worse than many women you know."

She broke off in her impetuous way, and darted on to another subject. After we had discussed what murders a woman would commit for child or lover, a subject on which the actress was profoundly interesting, she said:

"You would have laughed the other night. The man at the side put the paint"—then came the Ellen Terry shudder, and she went on in her most tragic voice—"the *blood*, on my hands, and in the hurry and excitement I didn't look. But when I saw it I just burst out crying."

That, of course, is the Ellen Terry temperament: she

never acted better than when she could be her real self.

"You say I can't be Lady Macbeth, whilst all the time, you see, I am quite as bad! You are right. I can't play the part; it is good of you to let me down easy," and away she went at a tangent about Mrs. Siddon's shoes.

"Was it not nice of an actress? She sent me Mrs. Siddon's shoes? Not to wear, but to keep. I wish I could have 'stood in 'em.' She played Lady Macbeth—*her* Lady Macbeth, not Shakespeare's—and if I *could*, I would have done hers, for Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth was a fool to it."

All through her career at the Lyceum, Ellen Terry was loyal to the core, and, as I have said so often, to her ideal Ophelia, her ideal Portia, her ideal Beatrice, should have been added her ideal Rosalind. The failure to mount *As You Like It* at the Lyceum, with such a Rosalind at hand, is about the only "lost chord" that I can recall in a delightful dramatic harmony.

If I cannot follow this artist through the list of plays and style of art identified with the French actress Réjane, I must be excused. I do not know Ellen Terry as Madame Sans Gêne, or even as the mother in Robespierre.

In the *first* an excuse has to be found for stage salacity; in the *last* we discuss the details of a nobler, more energizing and loftier art.

"22, Barkston Gardens,

"Earl's Court, S.W.

"No, ma'am, I'll not forget the engagement at twelve o'clock at Bailey's Hotel, but I'm writing to Mrs. Harrison to say that dinner at four will be impracticable for both of us—Henry has an engagement as soon after the reading as can be contrived, and I must simply hurry off into the country and get some air whilst I have a chance, for I'm tired—tired—tired——

"Poor Mr. Toole! Isn't it sad? Oh, dear, I think ill health is *disgusting*, and it generally comes from over-

work with brain workers . . . and that is just *silly*, and a loss to "The General."

"Yours affectly.,

"NELLEN TERRY."

"P.S.—Do tell me (some day) where, and in what paper you write your 'American Letter.'

"Thank you, I think I've nothing to say just yet, although in a little while I may act a delightful little play—*my* part, an American lady—and—as *I know* her!"

I now regretfully take my leave of an altogether enchanting subject. Among my most treasured possessions, I preserve a letter written to me on the eve of my departure for a journey round the world in 1892 :

"22, Barkston Gardens, Earl's Court, S.W.

"October 10th, 1892.

"I send this, which wants no answer, to say I much hope you are not going away because you are really ill, and to wish you every good thing on your journey. Will you take me to Japan?!!! Oh! I want to go there! By Jingo! You'll be missed here. I may chance to see you before you start, but, if not, I pray God be with you, and God bless you.

"Yours affectionately,

"ELLEN TERRY."

Here is an extract from Clement Scott's notebook :

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Miss Terry, if you please!"

It was the call-boy's knock. It was the call-boy's voice.

At that precise moment "Our Nellen," as she so often signs herself, was sitting in her airy and comfortable room at the back of the Lyceum stage.

My delightful occupation was watching and listening.

I had often heard of the miraculous way Ellen Terry sometimes "lapwinged" from her dressing-table and alighted on the stage only just in time to take up her cue. Now I should probably witness the feat for myself.

"You need not go, you need not go! Stay till after this act; it is nearly over. Here, follow me."

Ellen Terry literally skidded round the corner and down the stairs, whilst I, almost falling over myself in my exertions to keep pace with her, followed as expeditiously as I could.

We arrived safely, thank goodness, at the wings, where, opening a door and raising a heavy curtain, Ellen Terry gently pushed me through it. With a whispered "Sit there," an order I promptly obeyed, the curtain dropped, the door clicked, and in another second I heard that sweet, throbbing voice speaking the impassioned lines of Queen Henrietta Maria in W. G. Wills' *Charles the First* play.

When I had collected myself, and my scattered senses became more crystallized, I commenced to take stock of my surroundings.

Where was I?

As my eyes grew accustomed to the dim religious light—a "dark scene" was being played—I found I was in a tiny recess, sitting on a little seat "made for one," and within half a yard of the stage proper.

I wonder if any of you remember this small crypt in the Lyceum Theatre, or if any of you have been located there with the curtain up and a play being acted?

If you have, you can sympathize with me, for my experience proved, indeed, a terrible one. There I sat, and as the figures assumed shape and became familiar, so there crept over me a sensation too fearful to describe. Gradually and surely I felt an unseen hand gripping hold of me, driving and urging me on, on, on—almost pushing and thrusting me on to the stage.

A step forward and I should find myself in full sight of the audience! I became hot and cold by turns. To cry out would be useless. The sides of the recess were smooth, and I could find no hook nor crook to hold myself back by.

The feeling grew more intense every moment. Think of it! Nothing between me and that stage! Nothing, nothing, nothing!

The situation terrified me.

My brain began to reel. I felt giddy and faint, and a cold clamminess took possession of me.

I fancy Ellen Terry must have caught sight of the terror depicted on my face, and read there the insane desire that had seized me, namely, to rush wildly upon the stage; for she took an opportunity of crossing to where I crouched, huddled together, and as she brushed past me, she murmured something, but I was too scared to catch the tenor of her words.

All self-control had left me. Would that act never end? In another second my madness would be complete. I must rush on—I was going—going—going—when a burst of applause thundered forth. Down came the curtain. The tragedy had mercifully not reached the climax!

What a relief! What an escape!

I was never cajoled into that cambered alcove again.

Ellen Terry told me afterwards that Gladstone, when he became very deaf, frequently occupied that seat in order to hear the play distinctly.

He, too, had experienced the same sensation; and not only did he long to rush on to the stage, but he wanted to make a speech into the bargain. Fancy a rhodomontade on Home Rule in the midst of Cordelia's death scene, or Mephisto's meditations among the gnomes and goblins amongst the Brocken in *Faust*!

A woman full of great and generous impulse is Ellen Terry, a woman so sympathetic that she shares your joy and pain alike; a woman full of moods, caprice, fantasy, waywardness—call it what you will. But Ellen Terry is always a woman, always, always.

Tears born of laughter fall as easily as tears born of sorrow from those ever lovely dream-laden eyes of hers.

Talk about an actress feeling the character she is playing—why, I have known Ellen Terry say things *sotto voce* during a performance which compel you to believe in the depth, the truth, the sincerity of her acting—things she

herself has not been responsible for, but which have been apparently wrenched from her by the agony of deep-felt emotion, or the keen sense and enjoyment of fun.

Let me explain to you what I mean.

In the very play I mentioned just now, *Charles the First*, there is a heart-rending scene where the King is taking a last long farewell of his two little ones.

On the night I speak of, Queen Henrietta Maria, otherwise Ellen Terry, placed the two children in the arms of her doomed husband, and audibly I heard her say as she moved "up stage," her whole being convulsed with genuine sobs :

"Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do ; this is too cruel, too cruel !"

Again in a pretty little conceit called *Journeys End in Lover's Meetings*, Ellen Terry had to take up a picture frame, and replace it without saying a word, just as a natural "bit of business."

When the moment came, she picked up the frame, and recognizing the likeness, ejaculated quite spontaneously :

"Good gracious ! Why, it's Mr. McKinley !"

I told her afterwards what had happened, and she only laughed and said : "Did I really say that ?"

The whole of the Ellen Terry temperament seems summed up in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, when Beatrice, in answer to Don Pedro's assertion that she must have been born in a merry hour, replies : "No ; sure, my lord, my mother cried. But then there was a star danced and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy !"

Isn't that the Ellen Terry temperament to the life ?

Marie Tempest and I happened to be lunching together at the "Savoy" on a certain afternoon, when Ellen Terry and, if I recollect rightly, Mrs. Comyns Carr, were sitting at a table near to ours.

At the Lyceum Theatre the Poet Laureate, Tennyson, was enjoying a famous run there with his beautiful play *Becket*. The "worldly" gown Ellen Terry wore as Fair Rosamund in this poetic drama baffled description, and

made every woman enthusiastic over its gorgeousness and wondrous colouring.

The glints and varied shades as the actress moved about the stage were exquisitely lovely, and the soft limes as she stood in the stage sunlight made them irresistible. Ellen Terry stopped to speak to us on her way out of the restaurant, and Marie, expressing the delight created by her performance, also praised the glories of her dress, and asked : " Where *did* you get such a wonderfully artistic thing ? "

Ellen Terry paused a moment, and then whispered softly : " Mrs. Keeley is ninety-nine, and so am I, so am I, so am I ! " and she floated down the room and out of it.

Can't you hear her saying it, *à propos* of nothing at all. But why Mrs. Keeley ? And why ninety-nine ?

As a matter of fact Ellen Terry's gowns were nearly always designed by Mrs. Comyns Carr, and made by Mrs. Nettleship until Ellen's daughter Edie Craig, also a clever actress, started a theatrical dressmaking establishment, which is still being carried on by her and others.

Dramatic instinct also is very strongly engraven on this most remarkable actress's character. Let me tell you of a fine incident that occurred at the beginning of the year 1901.

It was the morning of Queen Victoria's funeral. Ellen Terry and a man with whom she had not been on speaking terms for a long, long while, a staunch and true friend ever, chanced to be guests at the same house.

They met, and this old friend of long ago was passed by as if he had been the veriest stranger.

" Will nobody try and get them to shake hands ? " asked—I think it was Douglas Straight, then Editor of the *Pall Mall* evening paper, I'm not quite certain ; at any rate, it must have been someone who knew them both well, and felt the situation keenly.

" Leave them alone. No one can do any good. It is pitiful, but an outsider may only make the position worse," I replied.

Time beat on. The moment was a solemn one. Our

nerves were strained to the tension of breaking-point. Some of us were wedged together on one of the carpeted balconies. I was kneeling in front, the alienated man was behind me, and next to him, by Chance, or Fate, stood Ellen Terry.

The hour had come.

The procession approached to the sound of muffled drums and the slow, heavy beat of the soldiers' "death tramp." Nearer and nearer it came, and as it passed us by, there fell—splash, splash—one on the sleeve of my coat, the other on my hand—two large tears.

I turned my head.

Ellen's lips were resting against the rugged cheek of that old, old friend.

Whatever the rift, whatever the rent, be it of her making, or his, or neither, all was forgotten in that supremely dramatic moment. R.I.P.

In America Ellen Terry is just as popular, just as well loved, just as much appreciated and just as much admired as she is in her own country.

If ever anyone would like to boast two nationalities, it is Ellen Terry, for she simply adores America.

The exhilarating atmosphere agrees with her sunny, madcap disposition, and she is never more happy or well than when careering round Central Park, New York City, or way off to Claremont by the Hudson River in the latest fashioned automobile, laughing and joking with all the fire and merriment of a girl of sixteen.

Of all the characters I have seen Ellen Terry play commend me to the exquisite pathos of her performance as Margaret in *Faust*. As Clement Scott so vividly described it :

"No one who ever heard it will willingly forget the unutterable sweetness she gave to the lines of her approaching death :

"To-morrow I must die,
And I must tell thee how to range the graves.
My mother, the best place. Next her, my brother,
Me, well apart—but dearest, not too far—
And by my side my little one shall lie."

The expression put into those words : " But dearest, not too far " is beyond description. It went straight to the heart, and this scene acted with such intensity, purity and poetry was the climax of one of the most beautiful performances Ellen Terry ever gave the stage.

Margaret has been played and sung many scores of times, but never so well understood or so poetically expressed. Innumerable fancies of Margaret have often been given, but here we seemed to read the woman's very soul.

The ideal Margaret, an evergreen, abiding and immortal memory.

This letter from W. G. Wills, the author of the Lyceum version of *Olivia*, *Faust* and *Charles the First*, is a tender tribute to Ellen Terry's great gifts :

" Ailsa Villa,
" St. Margaret's,
" Twickenham.

" MY DEAR SCOTT,

" Out of the few copies of my book of plays I have reserved one for you ; it lies at the Garrick Club. It is not necessarily for you to wade through as you are busy, and it is a bigish book—it is merely as a pledge of deeply grateful friendship. When I get to town I will send it on, and you will write and tell me how much I owe to the exquisite expression of Ellen Terry's reading, and how little my worth would have been without her ideal conception of the characters so divinely played by this enthralling actress.

" Yours very cordially,
" W. G. WILLS."

May I add a small footnote to this ?

My recollection of W. G. Wills is very distinct, although I could not have been more than ten years old when he used to come to our house. My father was a member of the old Arundel Club, in Salisbury Street, Strand, which boasted for members such men as W. S. Gilbert, H. J.

Byron, "Dundreary" Sothern, Clement Scott (Secretary), W. G. Wills, Wilkie Collins, and a host of names all celebrated in *La Vie Bohème*.

W. G. Wills in addition to writing plays was also a painter of pictures. He would arrive at our house for dinner on Sundays; five o'clock—a ghastly hour; but he would generally come about two—in a marvellous get-up. It consisted of light fawn trousers, an old brown velvet coat, with two or three clay pipes sticking out of his pocket, and a loosely-tied neckerchief, such as the students of the Quartier Latin used to wear.

My chief remembrance, though, is of Mr. Wills giving me a new shilling for walking across the lawn thick with untrodden snow in a bright little scarlet cloak and hood which I had on, having just come indoors from my afternoon exercise.

That one startlingly brilliant bit of colour against the immense sheet of glittering white appealed to his artistic sense, and he wanted to see the effect of it. I got a good scolding—but I also got the shilling.

W. G. Wills was not unlike Charles Dickens in appearance, but oh, dear W. G. W. was an untidy and unwashed creature. I hated being trundled on his knee, he always seemed so stuffy.

The old, well-worn story of the piece of egg and the beard originated with W. G. Wills—but I'm sure it must have been there more than three days. A fortnight would be nearer the mark, perhaps longer even than that.

CHAPTER XIII

WILSON BARRETT

THE ACTORS' ORPHANAGE

AND

"JOE LYONS"

"MY love to you both ! May God bless you !"

This message is the first remembrance I have of Wilson Barrett, and with his hearty greeting there arrived a huge sheaf of Californian roses, tied with streamers of pink, white and blue ribbons.

Wilson Barrett was touring Chicago ; Clement Scott and I were in San Francisco getting married.

During that long and eventful journey through the States we three never met, but frequently we reached a town as he contemplated leaving it, and we would invariably find a friendly trace of him waiting for us—just a "hand touch from the old country" which made us feel less lonely on our travels, for we had been away from England many months, and were getting a bit homesick.

It must have been in the late autumn of the year 1893 that we received a wire from Wilson, who had then, like ourselves, returned to London.

"Have something important to say and want your candid opinion ; will you and your wife dine with me this evening ? If yes, name your own time and place.—
WILSON BARRETT."

We did accept the invitation, and met for dinner at Gatti's restaurant in the Strand, a very popular rendezvous for the theatrical profession in those days.

After our cheery meal, and when coffee had been served, Wilson Barrett disclosed, with a certain amount of nervousness, for him, the plot of a new play he had in his mind to write.

As the actor proceeded with his story, Clement Scott became most enthusiastic, and presently the two of them were hard at it, arguing first one way, then the other, and suggesting hundreds of alterations and improvements with an alertness that only men of such highly strung, sensitive natures, teeming with dramatic instinct, could do.

"And that's your honest opinion, is it, Clem?" asked Barrett.

"My dear Wilson, there's a fortune for you in the play," replied C. S.

"Then if that's how you feel about it, come in with me, old fellow. I'll do the carpentering, and you shall do the polishing, as we did with *Sister Mary*, and we'll share the profits together," suggested Barrett.

"No, no, old friend, don't tempt me. I've too much work to do already; besides, the idea is yours, the play is yours, there's very little to do to it, it's practically written and finished."

"That's my business, not yours," argued Barrett, "you've been a loyal pal to me in all my troubles. I'm not through with them yet, God knows, but all the same I want to show in deeds, not words, that I'm not unmindful of your friendship. You believe in the play; so do I, and I ask you again to come in with me. Write it and share the profits—will you?"

But persuasion had not the slightest effect. Clement Scott refused the kindly offer firmly and decidedly.

That play turned out to be Wilson Barrett's biggest financial success so far as he himself was personally concerned. They named it there and then, that very evening,

"THE SIGN OF THE CROSS,"

The title came from Clement's brain, and being a

Catholic—a convert before he reached the age of twenty-one—you can understand how it delighted him to hear Barrett say he'd stick to it.

Wilson Barrett was heart and soul in accord with Clement Scott for the clean, human and wholesome school of plays. You could not have found a fiercer opponent in the world of the "shady morality drama." He always tried his best to maintain the dignity of the theatre, and never debased it by resorting to stories of a questionable or ill-tasting character, no matter what their intrinsic value might be.

Without a trace of cant or hypocrisy about him, Barrett called things by their right name, and if anyone tried to do him an injury or an act of injustice, woe betide them, for he wouldn't rest until he had brought the offender to his knees and sifted the matter to the bitter end.

Wilson Barrett was one of the most universally loved and respected actors I have ever met. His fearlessness, his courage, and his at times almost reckless determination to overcome the impossible would read like a fairy-tale, if published to the world, but those who had the privilege of calling him friend can assure you I am speaking the truth.

When distress came upon him, and his reign at the old Princess's came to such an unhappy conclusion, Wilson Barrett refused to be made a bankrupt. He gathered his creditors around him, and promised them that every debt should be paid in full, and that they should not suffer on his account.

They believed in their "Wilson," and from that moment he virtually placed himself in pawn, paying regularly the interest to the uttermost farthing; and in the Christmas time of 1896 he stood "redeemed," a Free Man—penniless, but rich with hope and health, and more determined than ever to go on conquering and winning victory upon victory.

Nothing on earth daunted him, the more he was thwarted, the harder he clenched his teeth, doubled his fists, and said: "*I WILL!*"

“ Please run round after Act I. is over ; I know it is no use asking Clem, as he hates coming behind the scenes.—W. B.”

An attendant handed this little note to me at the Lyric Theatre on the first night of the production of *The Sign of the Cross* in London. Barrett had already made good with his play in America and the English provinces.

The servitude to his creditors was drawing nearer the end, but some of the “clutchers” were still hanging on fast.

At the back of the stage I found Wilson Barrett, his eyes literally blazing with indignation, and his voice shaking with suppressed passion.

“ Can you believe any creature worthy of the name of man could be guilty of a thing like this ? ” he began. “ To-night, of all nights in my life, with my name and reputation trembling in the balance, this coward sends me this ! Think of it ! ”

Wilson Barrett had been served with a writ three minutes before he had to go on to the stage and receive his verdict of success or failure in the great metropolis—the meaning of which meant almost everything in the world to him. And the man who had perpetrated this vile deed had, so Wilson told me, gained both money and fame through the actor’s former triumphs. A pretty way to repay him, truly !

Wilson Barrett delighted in reading this old cutting from a newspaper to any newcomer :

“ WANTED. A young actor with good stage presence. Must provide own props, and dress like a gentleman both on and off the stage. Salary one guinea weekly.”

Barrett answered this advertisement, and it secured him his first engagement at the Halifax Theatre. He knew nothing about acting, but had taken lessons in dancing, and used to “trip it lightly” between the different plays and farces.

When his wages went up from a guinea to £1 7s. 6d. he

hardly knew how to contain himself for joy. Talk about commencing at the bottom of the ladder—Wilson Barrett started without even the ladder, and had to make that too.

He ended by leaving a fortune of over thirty thousand pounds in hard cash and his rights in several money-making dramas—and that after paying debts amounting to well over fifty thousand of the best !

In addition to being one of the most charitable and generous of men, Wilson Barrett revelled in mischievous fun.

I call to mind a certain week end, when Clement Scott and I had gone to our little bungalow at Hayling Island. It was then the only living house of any description that adorned the long stretch of seashore which reaches almost to Southsea, and anyone being on the Island could easily take note of when we came in, and when we went out.

We arrived rather late in the day, and our *bonne à tout faire*, an elderly dame, had the advantage—for a bungalow particularly—of being exceptionally deaf. Access to our seaside home could readily be made, it simply meant “lifting the latch and walking in.”

We went as usual for a stroll across the common towards the old ferry house, and on our return, found a note awaiting us. The paper bore the heading : “Royal Hotel, Hayling,” the handwriting read as follows :

“Mr. Marshal Stalk presents his compliments to Mr and Mrs. Clement Scott, and will they honour him with their company at dinner at seven o'clock ? ”

We looked at each other in bewilderment. We knew no such person as Mr. Marshal Stalk ; besides, we resented anybody disturbing the peace of our dear, lonely little island. However, Clement sauntered over to the hotel, but could get no news of the mysterious, unwelcome stranger.

The next morning away we drove over to Havant to do our marketing for the forthcoming Sunday. On our return, as assertive as it could be, stood another note,

glaring at us from the mantelpiece. We opened it and read these words :

“ Mr. Marshal Stalk presents his compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Clement Scott, and will they favour him with their company at one o'clock for luncheon ? ”

We were indeed perplexed. Who in heaven's name was this Mr. Marshal Stalk ?

I went across to the hotel this time, and received the polite assurance that no gentleman with a name like that had been heard of there.

This sort of thing continued till Sunday evening. It didn't matter how short a distance we strayed from the bungalow, there, on our return, a maddening envelope lay waiting for us. We were almost driven wild with curiosity.

At last, when we came back from our late afternoon walk and found another letter, I rushed frantically over to the hotel again, and demanded to see the page boy who had brought it, for our elderly dame, who had never *heard* anyone, declared she had *seen* a boy creeping quietly out of the garden.

That beastly boy could not be found. He had gone to the railway station in the hotel 'bus.

Slowly leaving the little inn, more puzzled than ever as to who this uncanny person could be, I found myself suddenly half blinded by a terrific storm of rose-leaves which some thoughtless being had flung over the balcony. Stopping for the “ all clear ” I looked up to remonstrate with the inconsiderate creature, and discovered to my surprise, and laughing for all he was worth, the cheery face of Wilson Barrett.

A light dawned on me immediately, and I cried out “ You fiend ! so you are that depraved wretch Marshal Stalk ? ”

“ Now keep cool,” urged Barrett soothingly. “ Come up and have some dinner. I'll send over for Clem. I have enjoyed my holiday so much. Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! you poor dear things ! ” and he went off into a paroxysm of laughter again.

“ Keep cool, indeed ! Why, you've almost sent us crazy.

Mr. Marshal Stalk ! As if any person ever existed with such a name ! ”

“ Ah, there, I thought I should catch you out ; it’s certain you’ve never studied your Shakespeare, for he says most distinctly in one of his tragedies :

“ *Enter Hamlet with Marshal Stalk.* ”

There’s a wicked ruffian for you ! But how we all three enjoyed the fun afterwards you may well imagine.

Nothing irritated Wilson Barrett more than the fact of anyone not answering his letters. He simply hated it, and would inundate you with wires asking if you had received his notes, and not be satisfied until you replied. Here is a letter from him which is exceptionally characteristic :

“ Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.

“ MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

“ Well, well, I am crushed ! You neither of you care a jot about me or my play. I thought of all the world you two would have been with me heart and soul, and you will not even come and look at me !

“ I will not try to please you any more, nor tell you any pretty stories or lovely plots. It is no use.

“ As to the *Manxman*, Caine it was, not I, who in the first instance chose Pete as the leading character. For all else in the play, I alone am responsible. For the second edition I followed Caine’s instruction entirely ; he selected the scenes and their order. The scenario is his, not mine.

“ I cordially agree with Clem in all he has written in the *D. T.* but the ascribing to me the last version and construction. I feared the piece was doomed when I saw the first rehearsal. It has been a most unpleasant episode, and I fear the end is not yet.

“ *The Sign of the Cross* is as usual, creating great and intense excitement. It is no use writing to Clem, he never reads my letters, nor cares a snap about them, so I turn to you in my despair.

“ I suppose *you* do read my letters—sometimes !

“ Yours ever, W. B.”

Another interesting one from him bears out what I say regarding his unearthing and setting straight any unpleasantness or misunderstanding. It is to Clement Scott :

"MY DEAR PARTNER,

"From something I heard the other evening I gather that you are annoyed with me. Do you not know me well enough yet to be sure that I am neither a sneak, a spy, a gossip, nor a hypocrite."

"For the first time since we have known each other, you have been personally unjust to me. I can only attribute it to your supersensitive nature feeling hurt at some imaginary grievance. You have no real one against me, so own up like a man, and let all be as it was before. I, too, have my 'secret griefs.' I am going through the worst mental torture I have ever known or suffered from. Don't you join with the yelping crew who are trying to ruin me. Don't you doubt me as a man. I have opened my heart so often to you that you ought to know me. If you have reason to believe anything against me, please come to me straight, and let me at least hear what it is.

"There, now, I feel better. I hope to see you soon.

"Yours ever, my dear Clement,

"W. B."

The last letter from dear Wilson Barrett to me, full of sympathy and desire to give comfort, even at the expense of his own health, was written within a few days of his death, and will give you an idea of the hope that still lived with him, even while standing within touch of the opening gates leading to the Great Unknown.

"July 12th, 1904.

"MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

"I fully intended asking you to let me call upon you the other day, but I did not recover as quickly as I had hoped. I had a 'relapse,' and was not allowed to travel. Nothing but this kept me away. *I expect to be my own man in a day or two*, and should like to see you.

"I cannot do much good, I know, but it may change

the current of your thoughts to see an old friend. I will wire you when I get back, and try to persuade you to come along to the Hotel Cecil and have a little chat. The getting out of the house will do you good. Will you care to come? I must not run about much just now. I had my last solid meal on Thursday, and ought to keep quiet for a time—still, if you prefer it, I will come to you. I have nothing to say—only real sympathy from an old friend. Do not hesitate to say you would rather I stopped away, if you feel like that. I shall quite understand.

“Don’t stay in the house longer than you can help,

“Yours,

“WILSON BARRETT.”

Always ready to advise, always ready to extend the hand of friendship, always wanting to do you a good turn, Wilson Barrett never hesitated to give you the advantages of his own bitter experiences.

“Lyric Theatre,

“Shaftesbury Avenue.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I am sorry that you have been unwell; the weather is so very trying to most of us, and I expect you have had much work and worry. I will come to-morrow between four and five, as you suggest.

“I am most anxious that something should be done for Mrs. Bernard Beere at once. I wish I could do it alone, but I’ve no money, for what I’ve got, I owe. I have staked a fortune on *The Daughters*, but I think they will be good girls, and repay me. (They didn’t; they were *naughty, naughty* girls—and died almost before they were born.—Ed.). Bar accidents, I think you will be proud of me next Saturday.

“I must have a long talk with you and Mrs. Carson after the 6th, about the Actors’ Orphanage. Do not be in a hurry to bind yourselves to any definite plan. There is much to be thought of before anything is done. *I had the pleasure of forming ‘The Actors’ Benevolent Fund,’ and know what worry and anxiety it entailed.*

"OTHERS STOOD BY AND TOOK THE CREDIT, and to this day some £40 or £50 spent at the Princess' Theatre in expenses of advertising, telegrams, etc., has never been repaid to me.

"THIS IS YOUR WORK (with Mrs. Carson), and do not let others walk over you.

"More later on.

"With love to both,

"Yours,

"WILSON BARRETT."

I only came across this letter quite by chance the other day, when searching for one from Fanny Brough.

At the time of receiving it, I never gave a thought to its deep significance. To-day I think otherwise.

The Actors' Orphanage owes its existence to the name of Clement Scott—I acted merely as a lock in the door. His name was the key which unfastened it, his name attracted every actor and actress to our house to discuss plans, and ways, and means, and with the "Daily Telegraph" to back it up we were pretty sure of meeting with the success we did, and I repeat—but for the name of Clement Scott, the Actors' Orphanage would not be alive to-day.

But even then we had to enlist the sympathy of one of England's most remarkable organizers, and I say unhesitatingly that if it had not been for the untiring efforts of "Joe" Lyons, head of the firm of J. Lyons & Co., we could never have reached the summit of our ambitions as we did with regard to "The Actors' Orphanage."

From the moment Joe Lyons took charge of the business part, all went merrily; but until then Kittie Carson and I were floundering about like fish out of water.

That first three days' bazaar at the Queen's Hall in 1896, on June 29th, when it was opened by Sir Edward and Lady Lawson, on the following day, July 1st, by Mrs. Henry Labouchère, and the next day by Clement Scott, has never been outrivalled; it remains a triumph of perfect arrangement and systematic order. There

wasn't a hitch anywhere, and Joe Lyons had the whole responsibility on his clever shoulders.

“ Cadby Hall,

“ Kensington, W.

“ 27th April, 1896.

“ J. Lyons and Co. Ltd.

“ Telephone, 8570.

“ Telegrams, ‘ Kickshaws,’ London.

“ Mrs. Clement Scott,

“ 15, Woburn Square, W. C.

“ DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

“ We are making rapid progress with the plans of the stalls and the designs for same, and these I hope to have ready to-morrow or Wednesday. May I come down to you with them, and what time will be convenient ?

“ I am very anxious that you should have the draft for the circular to be forwarded to the various County Families, and I think this certainly should contain a list of Patrons and a full list of the Committee and Stewards ; it will give much more importance to it.

“ As soon as you can let me have this, I will obtain estimate for the printing, and at the same time for the plans being lithographed. It is necessary that no time be lost in this matter, as you will require to get the goods in as soon as possible.

“ I hope you are well, also Mr. Scott.

“ With kind regards to you both,

“ Believe me,

“ Sincerely yours,

“ J. LYONS.”

But Joe Lyons never failed in his loyalty to Clement Scott, and if ever the chance came by to repay the good turn he did him when he was a very hard-working, struggling subordinate, Joe seized it.

I can see Joe Lyons now at Olympia in 1893. If I mistake not, we were received there by Imré Kiralfy—

for we went not so much to be introduced to the dreamy loveliness of "Venice in London," as to witness the marvellous ballet, which had been staged by Imré, and his brother, Bulossy.

Yes, I am sure it must have been Imré Kiralfy who met us at the entrance, for we had not long returned from America, in 1893, the year of the great Chicago "White City Fair," the opening of which Clement had described in the *Daily Telegraph*.

It was at Chicago that we first saw Kiralfy, and dined with him in that city at the Auditorium Hotel, facing Lake Michigan—the hotel which had a large theatre attached to it, and where Kiralfy was running a similar show to the one at Olympia.

After we had seen the ballet, Kiralfy suggested we should go the round of "Venice in London," and here we were joined—I won't exactly say joined, but *rather* followed—by a somewhat badly-dressed and decidedly Jewish-looking gentleman, who bowed and scraped so humbly, that he made us feel most uncomfortable, for we both hated that sort of thing.

However, after the tour and a "glide" in one of the gondolas, we were taken into a small restaurant, where a most elaborate supper had been prepared. I can't tell you who first proposed the idea; I only know that we were immensely struck with the beauties of the whole scene, and that we were anxious to return in some way the hospitality which had been extended to us by the many friends who had welcomed us back to England.

We were not installed in a house then, and were only on the look-out for one. Ordinary restaurant dinners did not appeal to us, but the entertainment here appeared to be ideal for our purpose.

Joe Lyons jumped at the scheme.

"Only tell me if it's to be hundreds or thousands, and I will prepare everything for you. Leave it entirely to me, give me the date and the time, and I will undertake to do the rest."

Amongst the guests on this night of nights, when we

dined first, and afterwards viewed the sights of " Venice," were Edwin Arnold, John Merry Le Sage and his wife, Sir Francis and Lady Jeune, Frank Burnand and his wife, Henry Labouchère and Mrs. Labby, W. L. Courtney and his first wife, George Alexander and his wife, Beer-bohm Tree, Mrs. Oscar Beringer, the Bancrofts, Irving, Daly, Ada Rehan, a whole host more—about sixty or seventy in all—and Sir Edward and Lady Lawson.

Sir Edward sat on my right, and I don't think that Joe Lyons left the stand he took behind his chair for two minutes. In white kid gloves, Joe " explained " every new dish to Edward Lawson himself. The now popular entremet, named " Pêches Melba," received its preliminary send off in London, on this occasion.

Joe Lyons knew his business, and attended to it so admirably that Edward Lawson asked me for his name.

That same evening, Joe had the invitation to call at the *Daily Telegraph* office the day following, as a reception was being arranged to show some foreign visitors the workings of the printing business, and Edward Lawson wished him to do the catering for it.

From that time everything moved on velvet for Joe Lyons ; he saw his chance, he seized it, hung on to it, and never let go his grip.

He may have had clever men around to help him—and I'm sure he would never have tolerated foolish ones—but it was Joe Lyons and Joe Lyons alone who set the ball rolling, so let credit be given where credit is due.

It is the easiest thing in the world to step into a perfectly-fitting, well-shaped shoe and walk off in it—the difficulty is in the making.

Joe Lyons *made the shoes*, and if other people are walking in them now, don't let them ever forget that he *built* the " *last*."

CHAPTER XIV

YOURS VERY FAITHFULLY,
" FIFE "

A PART from King Edward, I don't think anyone connected with the Royal Household ever displayed more enthusiasm about things theatrical than did His Grace the Duke of Fife.

A staunch and firm upholder of the "human and wholesome drama," the Duke rigidly refused to countenance plays of the Ibsen and "Independent" type. He conveyed his opinions on one occasion most definitely, regarding the "Dramas of the Dustbin," as Clement Scott christened them. It was the first time John Hare contemplated visiting America, when a send-off supper, organized in his honour, was given at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Métropole, and the Duke of Fife consented to take the chair.

The date veered somewhere round about 1894-5, I think—it doesn't much matter. Anyhow, the *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* stew with the author, Arthur Wing Pinero, and his "aggressor," Clement Scott, still simmered and continued bubbling. On the occasion of this *friendly* farewell, Comyns Carr had determined once and for all to bait and depreciate Clement Scott, to annihilate him if he possibly could. He considered he had a bitter grievance against the eminent critic, for C. S. had been audacious enough to say in a notice of one of his poetical

works, that it contained more rhetoric than verse, and he was smarting fiercely under the ghastly insult.

He had made no secret of his intention verbally to chastise Clement Scott, and had openly boasted at the Garrick Club of the splendid opportunity this supper would afford him. It was to be a "Stag" party, as they call it across the ducks' pond, but we women folk managed to get leave for the hearing of the speeches afterwards.

When the anxious moment came, we were ushered on to a palm-decked platform, where we could both see and hear everything distinctly. "Pray silence for His Grace the Duke of Fife," sang out the usher.

The Duke, of course, was greeted with a ringing cheer as he rose to speak—but there were not many enthusiastic remarks made by the would-be critic-slayer after that speech had been made.

No views were ever clearer or more definitely expressed. Not only did the Duke of Fife say that he cordially agreed with C. S.'s opinions about the "dustbin dramas," but he furthermore added that he considered if there were mud at the bottom of water, the best thing to do was not to stir it up, but to leave it alone. He did not believe in making an unnecessary search for the unsavoury or the unclean.

After that, what could the enemy say? His brilliant oration availed him nothing; it had to be scrapped, and he merely muttered a few very commonplace platitudes. I never thought he could be so completely knocked out of time, as he was on that occasion. Truly he had counted his chickens before they were hatched, and he hadn't the strength left in him to cackle.

But the Duke of Fife often showed a keen interest for Clement Scott's critiques, and more than once I have been surprised to hear how intimately he must have followed them and his doings with regard to the theatre.

We had been dining with the Gattis one evening at the Adelaide Gallery, and somebody suggested that we should go to the Adelphi later on.

"Yes, do," said Agostino Gatti, "Johnnie Toole will be there, he wired for a box this morning."

The melodrama being played there was, I rather think, *The Fatal Card*, by Haddon Chambers and C. B. Stephenson—but I am not quite sure.

Before the house was rebuilt, there were two large boxes on the grand tier, and these could be divided, and generally were, by high partitions, which you could only see over by mounting a stool, or from the front, if you craned your neck round far enough.

We occupied part of the Royal box, the other portion being divided off for Toole and his friends.

The lights were lowered, we heard the people entering the "cubicle" by the side of ours, and the play began. No sooner had the curtain fallen on Act I., than the next-door occupants left their seats and went into the ante-room, which had been gaily lighted and arranged, as we thought, for Johnnie and ourselves.

Off we went gaily to join the merry party. The door had been pushed slightly to, and the visitors, considering who they were, seemed unusually quiet.

Clement Scott led the way, and I followed. He entered with a bang and a shout, and then stood rooted to the ground, whilst I, overwhelmed with confusion at what I least expected to see, beat a hasty retreat.

Think of it! There were we, uninvited and unannounced, suddenly tumbling like this into the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Fife!

The position could scarcely have been more embarrassing. What had happened to Clement, I did not know, until the curtain rose on Act II., when he returned to the box, and told me how perfectly charming they had both been to him.

The Duke had congratulated him on some verses he had sent him, which he had already acknowledged by letter, and then they had enjoyed quite a long talk together about the stage and various plays. He was truly delighted to discover what a genuine regard the Duke and Duchess had for the theatre.

" 18, Portman Square, W.

" November 25th.

" DEAR MR. CLEMENT SCOTT,

" I am extremely obliged to you for your kind letter and charming verses, which I have just found on my return from the country.

" The letter has been delayed, I see, owing to its having been directed to my old house in Cavendish Square.

" With renewed thanks, and remembrances to Mrs. Scott.

" Believe me,

" Yours very faithfully,

" FIFE."

Strangely enough, it was at 18, Portman Square, that we found ourselves in another very delicate and difficult position.

No one but those immediately concerned knew anything of the affair ; it only lasted about half a minute—but that half a minute seemed an hour.

The season had been an exceptionally gay one, and several wonderful theatrical parties had been given.

The Duke and Duchess of Fife were foremost amongst those who did honour to the Profession, and a very large gathering assembled in response to the numerous invitations sent out.

I don't think the Duchess of Fife could have been expecting to receive her father that particular evening, because many of us were already preparing to leave, and were standing chatting to friends in the hall, waiting for carriages to be called up.

Sir Edward and Lady Lawson were talking to us, and it so happened that the Prince of Wales had been the guest at Hall Barn the week before.

All at once we heard a cry from afar, which was taken up by others nearer.

" The Prince of Wales's carriage stops the way ! The Prince of Wales's carriage stops the way ! "

Then inside the house came :

“ Make way for the Prince of Wales, if you please !
Make way for the Prince of Wales, if you please ! ”

Immediately we lined up, and left the centre clear for His Royal Highness, who we were told afterwards had come on to his daughter's house straight from Covent Garden Opera House.

Opposite to us were Edward Lawson and his wife. The former, all eager to greet H.R.H., took a step forward, but the Prince of Wales did not take the slightest notice of his late host or hostess. He shook hands first with one, then with the person next to me, and passed along out of sight. We always spoke of that little incident as Edward Lawson's *faux pas*.

“ 18, Portman Square,
“ June 22nd, 1904.

“ DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

“ On our return to London yesterday, Princess Louise and I learnt that we were expected to take our two children to a party at Buckingham Palace to-morrow afternoon, therefore, to our intense regret, we have been obliged to give our box away for to-morrow's performance at His Majesty's Theatre, to which we had asked some friends to accompany us ! It is most unfortunate. Will you remember me to your husband, who I hope is better, and

“ Believe me, in great haste,

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ FIFE.”

This kindly letter I received from the Duke of Fife within a few hours of Clement Scott's death. The *matinée* referred to had been arranged for him by his devoted friend, Malcolm Watson, who is still a highly respected member on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. That day, at the final fall of the curtain, Clement Scott had spoken for the last time, he lapsed into unconsciousness, and his lips were closed for ever.

CHAPTER XV

“MR. ALFRED”

THE name of Alfred de Rothschild must ever be linked to gentle memory by deeds of charity, compassionate humanity, and never-ending acts of grace and generosity, especially by those who had the joy of knowing him intimately in the theatrical and musical profession.

An inveterate first nighter, his immaculately groomed and slender figure was familiar to all, from the gallery downwards, and his entrance to the box he always occupied—I have never seen Mr. Alfred sitting in the stalls of any theatre, not even at dress rehearsals, which he occasionally honoured with his presence—was usually the signal for a buzz of recognition. But he would take his seat quite unostentatiously, give a smiling glance round the house, and immediately start consulting his programme.

Mr. Alfred leaned towards the shade described as sandy in his earlier days, but as time passed away, his neatly-clipped little *favoris*, barbed by the ever faithful Charles, who held the position of Hair-trimmer-in-Chief to Mr. A. de Rothschild for so many, many years, gradually changed to the silvery snows of winter, and added considerably towards his delicate, fragile appearance. Mr. Alfred, the one with the pink and white complexion, as he used to be described, was the youngest, smallest, and so far as looks were concerned, the most refined of the celebrated triumvirate of New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C. His two brothers, Lord Rothschild, and

Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, both being of a much hardier and lustier type.

We never knew exactly what interest Alfred de Rothschild had in the old Gaiety during the John Hollingshead management, the theatre built by and belonging to Lionel Lawson, brother of Edward Lawson, the first Lord Burnham.

This much, however, we did know, that when the handsome, blue-eyed young Irishman, George Edwardes, took over the entire control of the popular playhouse in the Strand, at the time when Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie ruled the stage there, George had blarney enough to entice "Mr. Alfred" to put up money for taking over the Empire as well, and this music-hall was practically run by A. de R. for several years.

A small company, however, was formed for "talking's" sake, at the head of which sat the genial, good-looking George Edwardes, as Managing Director. Another director was a short, thick-set, florid-faced man, with a small, black moustache, nicknamed "Dickie the Driver," because he swanked around with a smart four-in-hand, and owned, in addition to his spanking team, a highly lucrative butcher's business in Torrington Place, Bloomsbury. Walter Pallant also joined the board, and Clement received an invitation to "come on," but couldn't, so George presented him with a founder's share from which he never had any dividend.

To this day, if I happen to be at an Empire première, my eyes invariably travel to Box 7, on the opposite prompt side of the house—the numbers, I fancy, were altered with the redoing of the house—where for ages, on an occasion of this description, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, faultlessly tailored, and wearing the usual buttonhole composed of vivid scarlet carnations, was always to be seen accompanied by that delightful fellow, Hector Tenent, who represented Mr. Alfred at the variety hall, and generally arranged his theatrical parties for him at No. 1, Seamore Place, W.

Mr. Alfred rarely missed a dress rehearsal, or a first

night of the George Edwardes' productions, and I think it must have been about 1895 or thereabouts, that we were sitting in a box at the Prince of Wales's Theatre—another of the Edwardes' ventures—when, next door to us, and nearer to the platform, this universal benefactor walked into his place. He was followed by Sir William Carington, then Equerry to Queen Victoria, and later on Comptroller to King George, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Schomberg Mc Donnell, who for several years acted as Lord Salisbury's Private Secretary.

Mr. Alfred bent slightly forward to find out who his neighbours were, and then, taking up a beautiful bouquet, his usual “ blooming ” greeting, which was lying on the ledge, well in evidence, he graciously handed it round the partition to me with a, “ Princess, this is for you.”

Overwhelmed with confusion, I hardly knew how to reply, but fortunately the orchestra started at this crucial moment, and I was saved further embarrassment from the “ Gallery First Nighters,” who were always prepared to boo or cheer, as they felt inclined, and on the mildest provocation. I have not the faintest idea why “ Mr. Alfred ” dubbed me “ Princess ” when speaking to me ; probably because I looked so the reverse of one.

It is absolutely impossible for me to tell you how many times I have appealed to Mr. Alfred in the pathetic cause of Charity ; but I can truthfully say that never once during the many years I had the privilege to know him did he ever fail in responding most lavishly to my requests.

Within a couple of hours or so after the receipt of my pleading, one of the well-known-by-sight Rothschild broughams, blue with a thin white line round the panels of the body, and a darker hood, would be in the Square carrying a message from him, together with either bank-notes or a cheque, perhaps both, and a request to be told if he could do anything further.

Mr. Alfred somehow made you feel he was grateful for being allowed to assist ; never that you should be thankful to him for what he apparently seemed so eager to give.

His munificent gifts instantly assured me certain success for any scheme, as I had merely to mention that his revered name headed the list, for others to swarm along with their contributions as quickly as they could.

From the Actors' Orphanage, when I, or rather the name of Clement Scott, founded that extremely useful and charitable organization in conjunction with Kittie Carson, the widow of Charles Carson, late proprietor of *The Stage* weekly journal, to every benefit I have been concerned with, Mr. Alfred never said "Nay," but gave me with both hands full, for each and all.

One of the last kindly records I hold of "Mr. Alfred's" prompt acts of mercy is contained in a letter I received from him on December 12th, 1906. It is an answer to a note from me, sent by express to his City address in St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.

My petition was made on behalf of poor Florence St. John. Unfortunately it was not until too late to be of real assistance that any of us knew how this large-hearted woman had decided to shut herself up in her house and starve, sooner than ask for help from her friends or the profession she had adorned so gracefully and served so well.

In my autograph book these lines are written by her

"My most intimate friends call me 'Jack.'

"La Béarnaise,

"FLORENCE ST. JOHN."

The first disclosure I had of Jack St. John's terrible plight came from Mrs. Leslie Stuart, who rang me up to tell me how urgently help was needed.

"Something must be done at once. Jack is actually without a thing to eat! I called yesterday to take her to luncheon, and found her in bed very ill; but even if she had been well, we could not have gone out together, because yesterday she had to pawn her only warm coat to buy herself some food, and she has nothing else to wear. Do think what we can do for her! She

has done so much for others, and it seems positively shocking to know she is lying alone and uncared-for in this pitiable condition.”

Mrs. Stuart spoke from her heart ; the position was, indeed, too truly painful. Think of it—a popular artist, a singer who in her own sphere had been unrivalled, a woman who had reigned a little queen in her time, to be starving and forced to sell her clothes to live. It didn’t seem possible. Florence St. John had “ topped ” charity lists for her own calling over and over again. I distinctly remember her name as a donor of fifty pounds for Mrs. Bernard Beere (Bernie), and now for her to be reduced to this cruelly poverty-stricken plight ! She refused to ask anything for herself ; she was as proud as Lucifer, and chose to pledge her things ; her jewels, and they were rare ones, had gone long since—and die of starvation sooner than accept alms.

Several managers had been approached by friends, who said they had done their best to be of use to Jack, but there been no result.

Mrs. Stuart did not know what to do, and I immediately thought of Mr. Alfred, and arranged to send to him at once.

In an incredibly short space of time a telegraph boy’s double rat-tat sounded on the door, and a wire was brought in to me :

“ MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT, 15, Woburn Square.

“ Letter already on the way to you. Am so grieved to hear your sad news.—ALFRED DE ROTHSCHILD.”

Within the next few minutes the letter arrived :

“ New Court, St. Swithin’s Lane, E.C.

“ December 12th, 1906.

“ DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

“ I have received your letter, and, as I telegraphed to you, I am indeed truly sorry to read what you tell me about Miss Florence St. John. If you are raising a fund for her benefit you may put down the name of my firm, Messrs. N. M. Rothschild and Sons, for fifty guineas.

"In the meantime I enclose you twenty-five pounds in notes for Miss St. John's immediate wants, as the matter is one of such grave necessity.

"Let me know if there is anything more I can do.

"I remain, yours very sincerely,

"ALFRED DE ROTHSCHILD."

Armed with this infallible *open sesame*, I rang up several prominent members of the theatrical world, and always prefacing my request with "Mr. Alfred has sent me," etc., etc., obtained in this manner promises of substantial worth.

Alas, Jack St. John steadfastly said "No." She declined to accept a penny from a soul in the profession, and this charming actress-singer, who had been fêted and applauded, and loaded with wealth, and jewels, and all the things that help to make life worth its pain of living, died in penury. But for the devotion of a few who had kept in touch with her she might have starved to death.

When I returned Mr. Alfred the twenty-five pounds, he told me how very anxious he was to gather together a sum of money and invest it for Florence St. John, as he had done for Nellie Farren.

At this other great artist's memorable benefit, given at Drury Lane, the fund raised amounted to the George-Robeyan total of seven thousand pounds. I should imagine more than half had been given by Mr. Alfred himself. Anyway, the investment proved so profitable that it enabled Nellie to live in peace and comfort for the remainder of her life, and without Alfred de Rothschild this could not have happened.

During the Royal Opera Season at Covent Garden Mr. Alfred always gave several "professional" dinners at his house in Seamore Place, and these would be followed by receptions of the cleverest and most talented artists in London.

I have listened to the entrancing playing of the greatest violinist ever known in this country—Pablo de Sarasate,

the handsome Spaniard, whose divine music has never been equalled in this country. I have heard Rubenstein, Liszt, Ysaye—another fine violinist—Melba, the Australian Nightingale, the brothers Jean and Edouard de Reske, and scores of superb musicians, at Mr. Alfred's Bohemian parties, when perhaps, if the nights were warm enough, a dozen or more open carriages would be placed at the disposal of any of the guests who felt inclined to take a drive in the moonlight round the park. Oh, those were wonderful times, I can assure you! Mr. Alfred had money in plenty and to spare, *but he knew how to spend it in helping to give others happiness.*

We only stayed one week-end at Halton, his gorgeously furnished Hertfordshire home, and we brought away with us the impression that we had been wafted for a spell to Fairyland and were dwelling in a Palace of Enchantment.

The building itself is not very lovely to look upon, but inside—the wealth, the luxury, and the hospitality could not possibly be described.

I remember being awakened with a start in the dead of the night by the muffled tramp of footsteps; and learned afterwards that the sound was made by the watchmen on duty, keeping guard over the art treasures of this famous House of Rothschild.

Another incident I recall is our arrival at Tring railway station, and the pointsmen at intervals all along the road and grounds right up to the house, who signalled the coming of the guests to their expectant host as the cars and electrics appeared.

No visitor ever went empty away from Mr. Alfred's home in the country. Giant boxes of hothouse flowers, and great baskets of luxurious fruits, delicious cakes and chocolates made by one of the many chefs, were packed into every carriage with the departing friend. The gifts were endless, but were part and parcel of the visit. Everyone was treated alike, from a Grand Duchess to a simple Madame.

The war undoubtedly hastened Mr. Alfred's death. With the murder of Lord Kitchener, for whom Mr. Alfred de

Rothschild had from the days of Khartoum, and long before that, such a profoundly deep admiration and intense affection, his health, never very robust, waned entirely ; he lost grip of life. Things that used to matter ceased to interest him ; his energy failed him, and when he died, it was like the going to sleep of a thoroughly tired-out, weary little child.

Beloved Mr. Alfred, how many there are left to-day who would sing a *Te Deum* of thankfulness, could you but be restored to life again ?

CHAPTER XVI

GEORGE EDWARDES, OLD SAVOYARDS AND OTHERS

GEORGE EDWARDES and Michael Gunn were first cousins, and yet in the cherished rosary of Old Savoyards few devotees will remember to count the name of Michael, although it was *mainly* to this generous, large-hearted, splendid fellow that Gilbert and Sullivan owed the foundation of their solid and lasting fame, and *entirely* due to him that George Edwardes obtained his start in theatrical life.

When *H.M.S. Pinafore* was launched in London at the old, steadily decaying Opera Comique in the Strand, financially it did not succeed, and dead failure for want of funds threatened to sink it altogether.

Fortunately at this critical moment D'Oyly Carte, then travelling with what he called his "Recreation Company," arrived in Dublin prepared to "show" at the Gaiety Theatre, owned by Michael Gunn.

D'Oyly, feeling desperate about money matters, made a confidant of Michael, and interested him to such an extent that the good-natured Irishman willingly agreed to render "first aid," which he did on the nod and without any further preamble.

Michael Gunn had the reputation for being a very wealthy man. In addition to his theatres, he possessed a large music emporium. They named him the "Chappell" of Ireland; in fact, Arthur Chappell of Bond Street and Michael Gunn were next door to being partners, and did a huge amount of business together in the light-

opera and singing realm, as well as in the piano-selling trade.

D'Oyly Carte, an exquisitely accomplished musician, played divinely, and could claim to be *artiste au bout des ongles*, although I am bound to admit he didn't look the least bit like it. He married Keith Prowse's daughter, Keith Prowse then owning a small shop near Northumberland Avenue, where he not only sold but made musical instruments.

The shop exists still, but it is on a more elaborate scale, and it is also one of the many of the Keith Prowse "libraries" where seats for the theatres and halls, etc., may be booked in advance by paying an extra shilling per stall, dress circle, or whatever places are required.

Other libraries would do "deals" with theatres, and sell at "best," often making big profits; on the other hand, they risked a loss if plays did not catch on.

I fancy, however, I am safe in saying that Keith Prowse almost, if not quite, originated the scheme of the fixed price in England, which now obtains everywhere.

The Keith Prowse Library is one of the very oldest in London, and the prominence given to this firm is directly due to D'Oyly Carte's association as Managing Director of the Savoy and the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Companies, and his marriage with Miss Keith Prowse.

Michael Gunn got dreadfully tired of seeing his cousin, George Edwardes, always hanging about the house doing nothing, so he wrote to his uncle, George's father, suggesting it was about time that George got busy.

"If you can get the boy a job, by all means do," replied Michael's uncle. "I am not over anxious that he shall go on for ever living on my money."

Acting on this excellent counsel, he trotted George Edwardes down to the Opera Comique, where Michael's "prompt relief" had just saved the situation and prevented the theatre from being closed.

In the box-office—it was almost as bad as rushing up and down the stairs and passages of a Tube railway station to get into the auditorium of this theatre—a pecu-

liarly tall and thin man, whom they called "Long John," attended to the tickets. "Long John" had married the celebrated dancer and high kicker, Mademoiselle Sara, better known as "Wiry Sal" on account of her extraordinary nimbleness of limb and acrobatic movements.

Lottie Collins, with her "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay," could not gyrate in the same street with "Wiry Sal," so they say.

When Michael arrived at the Opera Comique with his cousin, he took him straight to "Long John," with these laconic instructions :

"John, this is my cousin, George Edwardes."

"Yes, Mr. Gunn."

"John, I want you to take the boy into your office and teach him the business."

"Yes, Mr. Gunn."

"And, John, give him thirty shillings a week."

"Yes, Mr. Gunn."

"And, John——"

"Yes, Mr. Gunn."

"*See that he earns it.*"

"Yes, Mr. Gunn."

And that is the true history of the commencement of George Edwardes' career in the mumming world, and the way he received his "pass" to the *ranks* of the Theatrical Army.

From the minute Michael Gunn undertook to finance the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, impending disaster gave place to bustling prosperity. Another and better site in the Strand had at once been acquired ; the imposing and ugly Savoy Theatre rose up on it, and money flowed in there so rapidly that they actually didn't know what to do with it.

Every operatic speculation they invested in turned to gold, and the tiny gulf between Gilbert and Sullivan which gradually widened and widened into a seething sea, until all hope of stemming the relentless tide had to be abandoned, began over money.

Gilbert arrived at the Savoy Theatre one morning in a

rather more petulant frame of mind than usual, and found D'Oyly Carte and Michael Gunn chatting pleasantly outside the room that he and Sullivan shared together as a kind of office.

Laughingly, D'Oyly Carte suggested that, as Gilbert was now in receipt of such colossal fees, he might spare a few shillings to buy a piece of new carpet, as the strip outside their door not only looked shabby, but it had a hole in it.

W. S. G. instantly flared up, and declared that as Sullivan earned more than double the amount that he did, music being considered of much greater value than libretti, it rested with him to purchase another floor covering.

At that moment Sullivan, feeling distinctly bilious, joined the trio, and the discussion, which commenced with a smile, soon waxed into a furiously angry controversy.

After this, Gilbert and Sullivan did not speak to each other for a long while unless business forced them to do so. Then somebody tried to patch up the breach, but it proved futile. The trouble began again, and when their final work came out at the Savoy Theatre, instead of taking the curtain call, as they always did, Gilbert appeared on one side and Sullivan on the other, leaving the entire stage clear to mark the great divide between them.

A pathetic sight, indeed, remembering how these two had hitherto welcomed cheers and applause with hands linked together in sincere and honourable friendship for so many, many years.

Astonishing what a little hole in a little carpet can do—and *how money will talk*.

Sullivan's nature, until he contracted the fatal habit of drugging himself with morphia, used to be an extremely sunny one. His friends nicknamed him the "Cherub," by reason of his serene expression and ever-beaming smile.

The last time we met Sullivan in the south of France he had changed considerably. The fiercely brilliant sun-



GILBERT AND SULLIVAN:

[Facing p. 156.]

light there does show up every tiny little defect and failing. The drug had played havoc with him. His face resembled a piece of shrivelled yellow parchment. His eyes were lustreless ; he had developed into a tetchy, peevish creature, and his gambling mania had grown to such an extent that he'd be positively rude to people if they refused to play cards with him at the English Club whenever he wanted them to. His hours were generally from three to eight, and ten till any time the next morning.

But success never made Sullivan arrogant or dictatorial. He always maintained the most modest and unassuming manner concerning his own talent, and he never refused to help his less gifted or poorer *confrères*.

“ 1, Queen's Mansions,

“ Victoria Street.

“ September 11th, 1889.

“ MY DEAR SCOTT,

“ I have just returned from Leeds to find your letter. Your request is in itself a very flattering compliment to me, and couched in such a kind and pretty way, it becomes doubly gratifying. Pray believe me, that in accepting the dedication of *The Vale of Tears*, I am most anxious to show both you and Mr. Milton Wellings how pleased and edified I am.

“ In reading your words I feel inclined to set to work and write songs again ; they are admirable for music.

“ After Leeds has seen its Festival through, I may be seized with a desire to make songs once more.

“ I will keep your verses till then.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ ARTHUR SULLIVAN.”

My earliest recollection of Arthur Sullivan is of being taken to his box at Covent Garden, where as a child I used to watch him conducting the Promenade Concerts there.

His love then—Arthur Sullivan had a great big heart, which he *shared freely* with his numberless fair adorers—

assumed the shape of a very large and buxom, golden-haired lady. She sang, but how I cannot tell you.

An amusing story went the round about Arthur Sullivan and Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

They were going out to dinner one night in Savile Row. Neither of them could remember the number.

"How can I recollect numbers?" said Sir Alexander. "All I know is the door scraper is *E Flat*."

Away they went kicking the door-scrappers along the row.

"Here we are, this is *E Flat*!" exclaimed Arthur Sullivan. And it was the house right enough.

W. S. Gilbert execrated the very name of George Edwardes, and tried his hardest to get him away from the Savoy Theatre. When he did leave, he denounced him as the murderer of comic opera and the destroyer of legitimate musical comedy.

What is *legitimate musical comedy*?

As a matter of fact, George Edwardes had simply snapped at his chance, and as the style of entertainment he introduced when he eventually did leave the Savoy and stepped into John Hollingshead's place at the Gaiety, "cut more ice," as America would describe it, than the fast decreasingly popular Gilbert and Sullivan shows, he carried on for all he was worth, gathering up as he rambled along the Prince of Wales's and then Daly's Theatres.

He created an enormous boom in lovely chorus ladies. Mary Moore, now Lady Wyndham and widow of Charles, was one of the beautiful girls at the Gaiety when Jimmy Albery, her first husband, and author of the *Two Roses* met her. Constance Collier graduated from the Gaiety Chorus, so did Gladys Cooper, and any amount of clever and extremely pretty ladies, who have since distinguished themselves as actresses of no mean order.

These wonderful maidens, gowned in exquisite taste, formed a most attractive background for such brighter lights as Florence St. John, Marie Tempest—two of the most talented and lovely-voiced artists ever heard on

the Opera Bouffe stage—Evie Greene, Ellaline Terriss, Letty Lind, her sister Millie Hylton, Violet Lloyd, etc.

As a charming souvenir of his Savoyard days, George Edwardes took away with him one of the most æsthetic-looking of the *Patience* girls, Julia Gwynne, the owner of a well-trained and softly-modulated contralto. Julia Putney, as we knew her to be before she “joined up and went to the front,” happened to be a fellow-student with me at the London Academy of Music.

George Edwardes never allowed his wife to return to the stage again, and when I once asked him whether he intended either of his daughters studying for the theatre, he astonished me with his emphatic reply of “*God forbid!*”

“Gaiety Theatre,

“Strand, W.C.

“October 30th, 1890.

“MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

“Farren and Leslie will rest after Saturday till April, and then go to Australia to play *Ruy Blas* and *Joan of Arc*.

“On their return from Australia—November next—they will open in a new burlesque (this will be Miss Farren’s last season in burlesques; she will then go into comedy). The more I read your song, the more I like it. I think it would be better to keep it till the week before Christmas, and then invite the critics to hear it, and make as big a boom of it as I can. This is as you like, however; in any case, I shall not lose a moment, and shall have something for you to hear in a few days’ time.

“When can we go out and have a bit of dinner together?

“Yours ever.

“GEORGE EDWARDES.”

As manager of the theatre and frequently inviting his friends over to the Savoy Hotel for suppers, etc., George Edwardes “bumped” into a great big racing crowd, and rapidly caught the fever for betting and card-playing.

Harry Hamilton—who used to do a good deal of work for George Edwardes, writing well-turned lyrics, *Autumn Manœuvres*, assisting to adapt *Sans Gêne*, and several other musical plays—and I found ourselves only a very few days before this last of the Drury Lane dramatists passed hence, discussing how little there had been given to George Edwardes to gain the position he did, outside his vivid and powerfully persuasive personality.

Talk about blarney! Well, the whole stone might have been concentrated into George. Few could resist his charm of manner and delightful Irish mannerisms.

“Do you know,” said Harry Hamilton, “I think the funniest thing I ever heard George say was about old Tolstoi. We were sitting in his room, talking about Evie Greene, and wondering what we could do to get her back at the theatre for a new comedy. As we chatted on, Arthur Cohen dropped in and announced Tolstoi’s death.”

“Ah!” sighed George Edwardes, “dear old Tolstoi! Dead, is he? Poor chap! I’m sorry he’s gone. You know, Harry, he never wrote anything better in his life than ‘Good-bye, Summer.’”

Number 6, Park Square West, Regent’s Park, the little house George Edwardes rented in London—his large house was at Windsor near the grand oak forest—often got lent to theatrical visitors who hailed from America.

Augustin Daly took it from George for one winter season, and used to give the most delightful Seventh-day Bohemian parties there.

“6, Park Square West,

“Regent’s Park.

“Daly’s Theatre,

“Leicester Square,
London.

“DEAR SCOTT, AND MRS. CLEMENT,

“At last I have an hour that I can call my own, and when the theatre does not claim me—an hour which I can give to friends and very dear ones. So in my first leisure I turn to you, my heart full of gratefulness for all

the fervent words of sympathy, encouragement and endorsement you have given us here, during this hard-working season.

"Now, dare we hope that you and your wife will come to us next Sunday—please yourself entirely as to the hour if you have much to do—and have dinner with us ?

"Twain, Eugène Field, Miss Rehan, Bret Harte (' Good-bye, sweet Harte, good-bye,' as H. J. Byron whispered to him shortly before he quitted this life), Bob Farjeon and Maggie (Margaret Farjeon was Joseph Jefferson's daughter), and a few more congenial souls will surround the table, and Miss Rehan joins with me in most affectionate supplications, which I am sure you will not put lightly aside.

"We have a thousand things to talk over, and we shall have the place to say them in.

"Do please write ' YES ' to yours

" Ever sincerely,

" AUGUSTIN DALY."

Of course, we said " YES," only in much larger type than this, and when the Sunday evening arrived, a good many of us managed to get as far as the Park gate and no farther.

It was a terrible night. The fog hung like a heavy blanket in front of us, and we couldn't see a yard ahead. Continual muffled cries of " Hello ! Who's that ? " pierced through the choking vapour as some fresh arrival floundered along.

Then somebody got wise—I fancy it must have been that regal-looking woman and superb actress, Ada Rehan ; anyhow, a brain in full working order suggested that we should start groping our way along the railings, and when we came to the steps, stumble up them, strike matches, and try to read the number on the door.

This we did, and finally arrived at Number 6. Here more difficulty arose. For some unknown reason the knocker had been removed. and Mark Twain vainly

rubbed his fingers up and down the side of the door to find the electric button.

Matches had been exhausted, and we were on the verge of despair, as our thumps without had brought no response whatever from within, when Mark Twain's soft, drawling voice quietly informed us that a stray lucifer was already at work in his hand.

He struck the "find" very carefully, and the flame shone immediately on a little white ivory "pusher" inscribed in thick black letters, "PRESS."

"Clement Scott, the bite's yours. Go right ahead; we'll follow to the death!" said Twain.

Electric bells were rather novelties in those days and directions for use had to be supplied with them.

Augustin Daly, the Irish-American theatrical manager, who built the most beautiful playhouse in London, which still bears the name of its original owner, exercised a most extraordinary influence over his company.

Some of its members worshipped him, others feared him; the few hated him.

The superhuman power with which he swayed the dramatic talents of his leading lady, Ada Rehan, also an Irishwoman, can only be likened to Svengali and Trilby. I have never known anything to equal it before or since.

I compare two pictures of this wonderful actress. The one, when in the full bloom of her magnificent triumphs she came, accompanied by Daly, to the railway station in Chicago to give us a "God-speed" *en route* for Niagara. She looked absolutely wonderful. I can see her now waving her handkerchief to us as the train steamed away, her stately figure drawn up to its full height and her dear face adorned with those bewitching dimples and wreathed in smiles.

"164, West Ninety-Third Street,

"New York City.

"January 25th, 1895.

"DEAR MRS. CLEM,

"I was delighted to hear from you, and that

my little remembrance—in a way—was a success. The glasses were not mine, but the dear Guv's offering.

"What a happy time you are having! It seems to me you are still on your honeymoon.

"The news about the theatres of London and Paris is the same with America.

"It is a really terrible year for theatres. The Kendals have just finished a dull engagement of four weeks in N. Y.

"Even *Sans Gêne* is not successful. B. Tree opened on Monday night; they certainly did all they could to give him a good send-off, but it is a thoroughly bad season to try one's luck in.

"We are doing fairly well with old plays. Our Japanese production a terrible failure, beautifully done; but they would not have it.

"Please tell Mr. Clem, he will not be surprised.

"Do write again soon; it does me good to read your letters; they are always so full of hope and contentment.

"Best love to you both, my friends.

"I remain,

"Ever affectionately,

"ADA REHAN."

We had been staying for a day or so with Daly at the pretty Virginia Hotel on the other side of the water across the pontoon bridge. Amongst the guests was Clyde Fitch, the author of so many plays—the one remembered more than any in this country I imagine to be *The Woman in the Case*, which met with such a storm of "Boos" in America.

Here, with Violet Vanbrugh as "The Woman," the play had a long run, and Clyde sailed hurriedly across the ditch to know the reason why. Poor lad, he could stand failure; he knew little else. But success—well, he just died; that's all there is to it. And he was such a dear boy, too; his house, 147, East Thirty-Eighth Street, New York, was so dirty, but so artistic.

Another of Daly's friends staying at the "Virginia" at the same time was Charles Yerkes, a man of fine

physique and iron will, who came over here to make the Tube railways. "The Tube King" they dubbed him. Alack! He did not live to see his plans fulfilled, but passed away quite suddenly at his house on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Charles Yerkes knew nothing whatever about art; he said so quite candidly; and, what's more, he didn't care a hang about it either; but he paid the most extravagant prices for every "Corot" he could get hold of. He told us he "darned well" wanted people to say after his death that he owned the finest collection of "Corots" in the world.

His wife's golden head and gleaming set of exquisite teeth were often to be found amongst Van Beers' sensational and dramatic pictures. He admired her type tremendously.

The last time we saw Ada Rehan in New York, Augustin Daly had ceased to be. The actress had changed so that hardly anyone would have recognized her. Her ambition had utterly deserted her, she had no desire to appear on the stage again.

Arthur Collins had cabled her a splendid offer for the next Lane drama, but she had refused it. Clement Scott argued with her for a long while and finally she invited him to come and see her play the following week in Buffalo, as she had consented to tour for a few weeks just to try what she could do.

It was truly pitiful. The Svengali influence no longer helped her, and we both appreciated her reason for so completely forsaking the stage.

A remarkable pair in double harness; but singly, and without Augustin Daly, Ada Rehan could not even speak her lines effectively.

George du Maurier's drama has never been so truthfully realized on the stage as here, in life.

CHAPTER XVII

BEERBOHM TREE AND "TRILBY"

CLEMENT SCOTT and Beerbohm Tree never could, and never would, agree. The perpetual warfare between these two whenever they met used to cause endless fun and amusement.

Clement Scott generally got the worst of the argument because he shouted. Tree won the conflicts through his Uriah Heapishness and effective restraint.

These two invariably "scrapped" when they met; Tree always wanted to convince Clement Scott that he *must* be a fine actor, and would state his reasons. Then Clement Scott tried to prove Tree's incompetency on the stage, but, outside print, he usually failed.

They harangued together in Clement Scott's study one morning until I really thought there would be bloodshed. When at last, utterly weary and tired out, they sat down opposite one another at the lunch table, Tree almost flung the plates on the floor; he declined to eat anything, and Clement Scott minced his food into thousands of pieces, wishing probably he could do the same with Tree. I acted as a passive onlooker at this merry meal, and have never forgotten it.

Then, to soothe his conscience or calm Clement Scott's feelings, I don't know which, he went away and bought an enormous American roll-top bureau for C. S.'s study. The dear blessed thing was such a size, it couldn't be carried into the hall.

Carpenters took off the front door, but the desk would not go through, so the door had to be put back and the present returned.

Eventually this huge piece of furniture got stored in some warehouse by King's Cross, and the first night of its lodging there the whole place caught fire and was burned down, so there ended the tale of Tree's well-meant gift to Clement Scott.

Beerbohm Tree tried many times to get Clement Scott to read his plays before he accepted them, and one of these in particular caused us no end of worry. Over and over again C. S. refused to look at the manuscript. Tree sent it up by hand, he called and brought it himself, he begged and entreated, and finally, without the slightest intention of keeping the appointment, C. S. fixed one for a Saturday afternoon.

That day Clement Scott wired : " Sorry ; going out of town," and we fled to Westgate-on-Sea.

On Sunday morning Tree followed us. He learnt, we imagined, through his friend Haddon Chambers, who had a house on this Thanet coast, that we were there, and down Tree came, with the play rolled up under his arm.

All that day it drizzled steadily with rain. We went out and walked in it until our clothes were drenched through. Tree stayed indoors by the fire, chuckling ; he knew that sooner or later Clement Scott would be obliged to cave in.

That Sunday night we were forced to listen to one of Tree's many failures, called, I think, *The Hair Shirt*, and taken from one of Balzac's classics.

I don't recollect much of the story, but Tree's entrance in little white shorts and a very emaciated pyjama coat caused an immense amount of enjoyment. That play didn't stop many weeks at the Haymarket.

Clement Scott had told him unhesitatingly not to court disaster by producing it, but Tree had made up his mind to produce *The Hair Shirt*, and he did ; so why so much fuss about reading it to him ?



From the picture by the Hon. John Collier

[By permission of Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree.]

Mr. Collier *Ellen Terry* *Herbert Beerbohm Tree* *Madge Kendal*

THE MEDDY WIVES OF WINTCOB

Clement Scott's unstinted praise for Tree's character-studies, notably his Reverend Mr. Spalding in *The Private Secretary*, his Macari in *Called Back*, his Demetrius in *The Red Lamp*, etc., induced Tree to believe in himself as an artist who could never fail in any rôle.

When he received the first intimation of his limitations in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, the pill must have been extremely unpleasant to swallow; but when an entire box of these most disagreeable condiments had to be taken—for, as ill-luck would have it, Tree couldn't find a good dramatic play to suit his temperament at the time—the actor appealed to Edward Lawson. But Edward Lawson merely told Clement Scott of the Tree letter to him, and agreed with every word which had appeared in the *Telegraph*.

At last the crisis was reached with the production of *Trilby*. In those days all theatre tickets for first nights were sent direct to C. S.; he made out his list for the week, sent it down to the *Daily Telegraph*, and went ahead.

So far as I can remember, Tree gave *Trilby* a trial trip in the country. Anyway, the evening before the production at the Haymarket, C. S. sent down to the office to know whether any tickets had arrived for him there, as none had been sent to the house.

No, nothing had come along to the *Telegraph*, and the orders from there were: "Wait and see."

The following day Mr. Le Sage wrote a note to know whether Tree had sent the usual seats, and when he knew that nothing had been received, he made up his mind there should be no mention whatsoever of *Trilby* in the *Telegraph* the next morning. So for once the newspaper came out without any first-night notice of Tree's new play. Clement Scott did not go near the theatre.

The second evening, however, he couldn't resist the temptation. Clement Scott loved George du Maurier's book, and not to see its dramatization meant a great punishment to him.

We rang up Keith Prowse, booked two dress circle seats in the name of "Cumming"—the name sounded ominous—and sent down for the vouchers.

The Haymarket Theatre had not been rebuilt then, but remained as the Bancrofts had left it, and the dress circle, raised on a level with the lower boxes, ran round the back of the stalls where the pit is now.

We had only been in the theatre a few minutes when Tree's manager—I forget his name, it was before Henry Dana's time—came to us, hat in hand, with profuse apologies from Tree.

He told us that the tickets we ought to have had the evening before had unfortunately been given to a messenger lad, who had lost them; that Mr. Tree had reserved a box for Clement Scott, and would be glad if he would kindly make use of it.

C. S.'s reply must have been expressed in *purest English*, for the man rushed off instantaneously, and we were left in peace to enjoy the play.

Now here is a very strong case in point concerning Clement Scott's prejudice.

Over and over again C. S. had been openly accused of being prejudiced when writing his notices. Surely he had grave reason at this moment for adverse criticism if ever a man had! On the one hand, he had Beerbohm Tree complaining bitterly to Edward Lawson of C. S.'s notices of him. How did Tree know what effect that complaint would have? And on the other, Tree had openly defied both Clement Scott and the *Telegraph* by not sending any tickets for the first-night production, because, of course, the messenger boy story was all skittles and untrue.

But Clement Scott's notice of Tree's Svengali was one of the finest the actor ever had. C. S. could *never*—and, God knows, he had temptations enough!—have been *prejudiced in any way whatever, either in favour of or against actor, actress, or author. A more conscientious—indeed over-conscientious—critic than he never breathed.*

In their book, "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off



Photo by]

[Lafayette.

LEWIS WALLER;

[Facing p. 174.

the Stage," Squire Bancroft describes his first meeting with Clement Scott in these words :

" And it was afterwards, at his own table (Tom Hood's) that we made the acquaintance of Mr. Clement Scott, who was then a very young man, known to his intimates and his friends at the War Office as ' Kitten,' and who we little thought in after years would sit in judgment on much of our managerial work, trying, we are glad to say, *never to allow friendship to sway adverse opinion, for his adverse views on some of our productions are as severe as any that have been written of us.*"

And now listen to this. In Edward Lawson's letter to Clement Scott, telling him about Tree, he winds up by saying :

" TREE IS A ——. WAIT A BIT—THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF TIME AND OPPORTUNITY.—YOURS EVER, E. L."

Doesn't that tell him to write whatever he wished, and doesn't that show the absolute and implicit trust Edward Lawson had in Clement Scott ?

After Clement's criticism of *Trilby* had appeared in the *Telegraph* two days after its production, another letter was written by Edward Lawson to C. S. :

" *Daily Telegraph.*

" MY DEAR CLEMENT,

" Tree has been to me, and has expressed his regret. He will write you a few lines, and I advise you to accept them, and to write him just a few words of a friendly nature, and start afresh.

" Always yours,

" E. L."

At the same time as this Tree wrote to me as follows :

" Although I have often resented your husband's attitude towards me, I have never desired that any *discourtesy*

or *unfairness* should be shown him, though I have of late sought to counteract the influence he has so persistently used against me and my theatre by every means in my power, and all personal intercourse has been impossible. From him personally, and notably on one occasion, I have received tokens of good feelings, and these things I do not forget. I have hesitated to write to you, but since your feelings towards my wife and myself are not such as to call forth reserve, I do not hesitate to tell you mine, and I sincerely hope there will be an end to this most regrettable incident.

“ Yours,

“ HERB. BEERBOHM TREE.”

Tree's idea of “ *discourtesy and unfairness* ” was decidedly quaint, but with all his faults few could help joining in admiration of him.

To have arrived where he did, unaided, is a feat worthy of the very highest praise. Call him a *poseur*, an actor of limited quantity, no actor at all if you like, but merely a curiously brilliant stage producer—it doesn't matter in the least—Tree's individuality attracted, *and he never fascinated for evil*, as his predecessor did.

In the art of “ make-up ” nobody could be compared to Beerbohm Tree. Think of him as Captain Swift, and as Fagin the Jew. Recall his *Last of the Dandies*, and his “ double ” in *The Man's Shadow* ; his Svengali—masterpieces in the craft, all of them. Talking of Tree's make-up reminds me of some rehearsal I went to at His Majesty's.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell was in the cast. I haven't the vaguest recollection of the play, I only remember that Mrs. Pat babbled of Isis and that Tree appeared as a high priest of something in white robes with blue ribbons in his hair, and that Maud Tree exclaimed very audibly :

“ Oh, *nobody* could say that Herbert looks like ‘ Our Miss Gibbs,’ *could* they ? ”

Gertie Millar was acting in a Gaiety show named *Our Miss Gibbs* at the time.

And I recall, too, the opening night of *Nero*, and Her-

bert's entrance in a chariot, wearing a lovely peroxide wig and a wreath of pink roses round it.

It was the signal for somebody to call out :

"By Heaven, it's Lady ——." And, true enough, it so resembled the very lady named, who was sitting in the stalls at that moment, and whom everybody knew by sight, that the downstairs part of the house rocked and roared with laughter.

The stories written around Tree's absent-mindedness are most of them heavy with long whiskers, but I was of the party at Victoria Station one Sunday, when we were going to Brighton, and Tree planked down his money at the booking office, just saying :

"Give me some tickets, please."

"What station do you want?" asked the clerk.

"What stations have you got?" replied Tree.

Another time Tree had kept me hanging about for I don't know how long one morning, assuring me that he had news to tell me in confidence, but I must *swear* on my sacred oath that I would keep the secret, and, above all, not say a word to Clement Scott.

I can't tell you how many times he started to tell me this wonderful "thing in Gath," and at every beginning somebody or something interrupted him—dogs fighting, a telephone call, a note by hand, a telegram—until I grew so weary that I told him I must really go, as I had to get back to luncheon.

"*Yes, so must I. Come along, come along,*" and he led me through the auditorium to the vestibule of the Haymarket, where we met Charles Carson, the late proprietor of *The Stage* journal.

The three of us stood talking for a few minutes, and then Tree called somebody to get him a hansom.

Turning to me, he implored me once and for all not on any account to divulge the story he had confided to me.

It was an easy promise.

Then we walked down the steps together, Carson put Tree into his cab, and as we turned to go away, the cabman lifted up the little trap and asked Tree ;

"Where to, sir?"

Tree looked horribly pained, then taking off his hat and drawing his hand across his right temple he called out:

"Carson, Carson, where do I live?"

And Carson bawled out to the cabman:

"Drive the gentleman to Hanwell."

After all is said and done, Tree's gravest fault was *vanity*, and we all suffer from this complaint more or less. Besides, his *vanity* built him a splendid theatre, and made a large fortune for him to leave to his family and his children.

Our late premier leading actor-manager did not do half or a quarter so much.

CHAPTER XVIII

LEWIS WALLER

“THE SWORD AND CAPER DRAMA”

HARRY ESMOND christened the Lewis Waller school of plays “THE SWORD AND CAPER DRAMA” years ago, and so far as his “one down t’other come on” productions were concerned, he could not have chanced on a happier inspiration.

Lewis Waller and I were pals in the days when he was at King’s College, and I a small person, with two pigtailed down my back tied with impossible-coloured ribbons. They’d be called “Snatches of Futurism” now, or something equally incomprehensible.

Waller and I made our first appearance on the stage together, he as a mere lad in his early teens, and I but a few years his junior. Waller played the character of Old Joe Barlow in H. J. Byron’s *One Hundred Thousand Pounds*, and under the grizzled grey wig of Mrs. Barlow, his play-acting wife, was ‘yours merrily.’

We both grew up, and with advancing years we burgeoned into crazy, mad reciters. His favourite morsel of eloquence used to be W. S. Gilbert’s “Yarn of the Nancy Bell”; mine an abominably blood-curdling poem by George R. Sims, called “Sal Grogan’s Face”—or “Sal Grogan” *without* her face. Sims never wrote anything more gruesome in his life.

Why on earth anybody encouraged us in such vice is beyond me to explain; but I was completely cured of

"Sal" when Gertrude Warden, sister of Florence Warden, the authoress, looking as white as a miller's hat before the war dirtied it, whispered in my ear a few minutes after I had given a drawing-room full of people my idea of how the Sims story ought to be declaimed :

"WHAT A MAGNIFICENT RECITATION, MADGE. I'VE JUST BEEN SO SICK."

That curled me up for a good many summers, but *William* stuck firm and remained adamant. He persevered in his guilty practice, and germinated from bad to better, from better to great, and finished by being top-dog for many years as England's finest exponent of declamatory verse, Shakespeare included.

Lewis Waller and I threatened to become more than mere friends at one time. However, one of us weighed anchor unexpectedly ; we drifted apart, and he eventually married my eldest sister. So Will became my brother-in-law, God bless him !

In Amateur-land we made good together on many occasions, and belonged to a ripping club, the Philothespians, that owned amongst its actors George Alexander, Beerbohm Tree, "Charlie" Coffin, and several others, who ultimately spread out as professionals—in extra bad cases the disease aggravated into managership.

Oddly enough we, inside the stage door, never thought much of Waller. He had an enormous voice, and shouted lustily. "Lewis Waller, hear him holler," as a leading lady smilingly remarked.

But Charles Wyndham toned him down wonderfully in Claud Carton's admirable play, *The Home Secretary*, which saw daylight at the Criterion in 1895, and in 1896 his triumph was complete when, as Hotspur—acted under the Tree management at the Haymarket Theatre—Lewis Waller won the first great Shakespearean victory of his life.

The audience simply yelled for "Waller ! Waller !" at the fall of the curtain ; and when once he got free from the chains which bound him, it was practically "Waller ! Waller !" until the final "call" closed a career that,

malgré tout, turned out one of remarkably high-feathered prosperity.

I say *malgré tout* for this reason. At least on three occasions Lewis Waller had a fortune lying in the palm of his hand ; but not once in the whole course of his theatrical management was he allowed to close his finger on it, to possess it, and to control it.

Something, or somebody, always held him back. He was swimming against the tide all the way ; he kept his head above water by sheer physical strength and dogged determination to buffet waves, which more often than not were perilously near to swamping him.

Lewis Waller and Beerbohm Tree were rivals in the field for Irving's position when the Lyceum Knight went under. Those in the know are well aware of the desperate fight Tree put up to gain his end ; but ambition, in the true sense of the word, did not exist for Waller.

He lived in Cloudland as an enthusiast, a romancist, a bit of a Don Quixote, a splendidly honest, straightforward and virile man. He was never a schemer, and no taint of "I'm the King of the Castle," or even "I want to be King of the Castle," warped his sunny disposition.

Was it a woman who ruined his stage career, or was it a man ? Perhaps you may be able to judge for yourself, for this is exactly what occurred.

Eager to come to grips with the drama of the particular swashbuckler pattern, such as he alone of his day had the fire and *nous* to play, Waller invited Henry Hamilton to write him a version of Alexander Dumas' "Three Musketeers," and on what proved to be an evening charged with adventure, they turned into Simpson's, and there, tucked away in a cosy cubicle, they started to discuss steaks, scenes and situations.

Now, as Waller's evil genius would have it, in the adjoining section, sat Beerbohm Tree, who naturally could overhear every word the actor and the dramatist uttered. To this day nobody, not even the old waiter, who, to be expressive, "blew the gaff," knows

how long Tree occupied his corner. Perhaps he never heard a sentence that was spoken. Who can say?

The fact alone remains that a few days after Henry Hamilton had practically completed *The Three Musketeers* for Waller, Tree sent up a message to Clement Scott, asking him to state in the *Daily Telegraph* that Sydney Grundy was preparing a new edition of Dumas' "Three Musketeers," which would be produced at his theatre, and that the proposed title was *His Majesty's Musketeers*.

The news came like a bombshell to all concerned on the "other side." Hurrying on business as hard as they possibly could, Waller romped in an easy winner with Henry Hamilton's play, presented for the first time in Suburban London on September 12th, 1898, at the Metropolitan Theatre, Camberwell, and appearing as the dashing French hero, Raoul D'Artagnan, literally sent the house shrieking with frenzied delight.

No actor ever received more genuine applause than Waller did that night, no actor more richly deserved it. He was humorous, he was charming, he was priceless clear in his elocution, he looked handsome, and his voice was superb in quality and resonance. Do you wonder that he conquered all hearts and intelligence?

But, alas! with this phenomenal *tour de force* came pandemonium to the house of Waller, and scenes took place altogether unprecedented in theatrical history,

As Miladi in the Hamilton drama, Waller's wife had also made her mark, and being a clever business woman, she naturally raised every possible supply she could in order to take a theatre in the West End and exploit her husband, Kate Rorke, whose performance couldn't have been more beautiful as the unhappy Queen of Austria, herself, and an excellent all-round company.

And this is where the wheels became hopelessly clogged.

Waller had already been booked for a short "round-the-town" engagement. He wanted to cancel his dates, but couldn't.

Florence Waller had obtained a lease of the old Globe

Theatre in Wych Street, fully intending to begin a season there with *The Three Musketeers* at any cost.

Beerbohm Tree had started hustling around selecting his cast for Sydney Grundy's *Majesty's Musketeers*.

In her reasonable perplexity, Florence Waller fled to Clement Scott for assistance, but he was barred from entering the battlefield on diplomatic grounds. However, he sanctioned me doing what I could in the matter.

Escorted by Charles Warner—why, in Heaven's name, Warner—Warner, of all people in this world, I cannot tell you—we went immediately to the Borough Theatre, Stratford, to interview the manager there, Mr. Fredericks. We might have spared ourselves the journey and the worry of it. Fredericks was as tough as leather. He refused flatly to let Waller off his contract to him, and threatened to injunct him if he dared to appear at the Globe on the Monday night instead of at his playhouse.

Charles Warner, always an emotional, hysterical creature, raved and screamed like a lunatic; he cried out that Fredericks was a heartless, cruel, unrelentless foe. To which rhodomontade there came but one reply:

“I WANT WALLER. HE IS MINE. I'LL NOT LET HIM BREAK HIS CONTRACT.”

Meanwhile the box-office of the Globe Theatre was being besieged with crowds clamouring for seats to see Waller. The queues wound up the street, and down the street, far into the Strand; you never saw such a state of excitement as the people were in.

They shouted to others they saw armed with tickets to know whether Waller had won the day and intended to play or not.

Waller did play. He entered the fray courageously, indomitable and determined. On the first night he acted so vigorously, and used his sword so earnestly, that, jumping anywhere to avoid a stunning blow from his adversary, he took a flying leap into the orchestra, and everyone present made sure he had broken his neck. But not a bit of it! In another second back he sprang on to the stage again amidst ringing shouts of approbation.

He was only the worse for that acrobatic feat by a few ugly bruises ; why he wasn't killed outright is a miracle.

Fredericks, true to his word, applied for an injunction to restrain Waller—and didn't get it. How we chortled and chuckled, and to celebrate the man's discomfiture, a luncheon party was arranged at Woburn Square.

We were all assembled waiting for Waller, who had gone down town on some trifling matter or other. Florence had arrived punctually, supremely pleased with herself and everything ; with her came Harry Hamilton, fearfully excited at the prospect of a fortune and nobody else to share author's fees with him.

At last we decided it would be better to attack the food while it remained in a fit state for consumption, and during the meal in stalked Waller.

That something had gone wrong we instinctively knew, but how wrong we none of us guessed. How could we dream that in one short hour the triumph of his life would be turned into such a disastrous tragedy ? But alas ! it was too true !

And Tree had perhaps unwittingly wrought the havoc. He knew what Waller's well-won spurs meant for *him*, and being no fool, he decided to engage him if he could, and thus make his own production doubly attractive.

" *All's fair in love and war !* " cried Tree.

The actor-manager had offered a huge salary. Waller accepted it, and Tree bound him down by contract for *three solid years*.

It may have been a wise move for Tree, it may have been foolish of Waller, it may have been Fate. Who shall decide ? There is the story, and that is why Lewis Waller, more popular than any man on the English stage at that instant, did not run in the race for Irving's shoes. He failed to grasp his chance ; he allowed himself to be scratched at the start, and Tree had the field entirely to himself.

Don't imagine, though, that this cruel set-back daunted him, because it didn't ; it only made him doubly keen.

His servitude done, Waller took over the Lyceum Theatre, and although opportunity never gave him anything so great again as Hamilton's *Three Musketeers*, he scored big with *Henry V.*; but once more got promptly squashed by a serious National calamity—the death of Queen Victoria.

At Liverpool, while touring with this Shakespearean drama, an intensely funny and an altogether unrehearsed scene was played. Can you still recall the Waller stage-whisper? It sounded like the subdued roar of a lion at the Zoo, and could be heard in every corner of any house ever built.

One of those beastly old-fashioned curtains in the theatre did the trick. It was a naughty piece of goods, which “evolved” in two parts; that is to say, it fell half-way, stopped, then unfolded mysteriously from behind, and with maddening ponderousness this nightmare, this Frankenstein, dropped with deadly slow deliberation to the floor.

The age it took to display its charms to their uttermost seemed interminable to those the other side of it, and, as you know, in *Henry V.* there is curtain fall after curtain fall on scene upon scene.

Now Waller had put up with this monster until even his patience gave out—which is saying something, for he lived up to his reputation of being one of the most lenient and tolerant of men. But just as he pronounced the last line of the invocation which commences, “O, God of battles, steel my soldiers’ hearts,” and remained kneeling with uplifted sword in a devout attitude of prayer—his eyes suddenly became glued to that wicked curtain as it descended lazily, came to a halt, and before the rest of it even started to unfurl, Waller, under his breath, in one of his most audible stage whispers muttered:

“*That bloody curtain will be the ruin of this play!*”

Bernard Shaw hadn't made that sanguinary word so stylish on the stage as it is now, so you may picture the effect of Will's spontaneous “gag.”

During the run of *Beaucaire*, which really did turn out

to be a great monetary, as well as an artistic success, though unfortunately, and just like the Waller luck, he did not have a very large share of the profits, as so many others were concerned in the piece, King Edward paid a visit to the Comedy Theatre.

Waller naturally felt immensely bucked to hear of the King's coming, and puzzled his head to think of something extra special to please His Majesty. A brain wave resulted in a scamper round London in search of a bottle of 1837 liqueur brandy; an excessively good vintage year, and also the year his worthy Mamma came to the throne.

Eventually being rewarded for his pains, Waller returned to the theatre carrying his precious prize with him. This he placed carefully in the tiny reception room at the back of the Royal box, making sure that the *etiquette* on the bottle should be well in evidence.

The eventful hour arrived, so did the King. The play proceeded, and after the first act, Waller's manager, Lyston Lyle, went round to see his chief.

"Well, and how is it going? Does the King seem pleased?" queried Waller.

"Rather! Nothing could be better. I am sure he is enjoying it immensely," replied "Teddy" Lyle.

"Yes, yes. And how about the brandy? I put it in his room safely. I hope he likes that, too," said Will.

"You may bet your life he does. Now don't you worry over that. *Why, I drew the cork and decanted it myself,*" answered Lyle with a thoroughly self-satisfied grin.

Once again, just when Dame Fortune made a pretence of favouring him, the huge popularity of *The Rivals* at the Lyric, in which Lottie Venne appeared as Mrs. Malaprop—oh! what a wonderful performance—was killed by the passing of King Edward.

But an even worse disaster awaited him when he landed in Australia. His merry welcome out there consisted of hideous warnings in every car and tram intimating that a ghastly epidemic of smallpox was rampant.

Oscar Asche and his wife, Lily Brayton, had gone gaily



Photo by]

[Moffatt.

MADGE TITHERADGE AND NANCY WALLER.

[Facing p. 180.

through the country a few weeks previously without any anxiety whatever, but Waller's evil star followed him everywhere as darkness does the day.

In South Africa, memories of gorgeous nights spent under the shadow of the Southern Cross and within sound of the restless sea must ever be associated with Lewis Waller. Sitting out on my little balcony enjoying the sympathetic rays of the warm winter sun, reading the *Cape Times* I learned from its columns of his arrival in that land of exquisite wonder and glorious colour. And here, a few weeks later, I met him, his daughter, Madge Titheradge, his leading lady, his brother Victor, Edith Lewis and a host of dear friends, the first I had seen since I sailed from England over twelve months before. We didn't squander one hour of that deliciously happy holiday, I can assure you.

In the ripe autumn of that same year, we met again. This time in a cool and shady English garden near Hampstead, and there, surrounded by a group of admirers, he began yarning away merrily of his *successful* (?) trip.

Work took him once more from the heart of London town to a large provincial city, where he had billed himself to play Beaucaire—always his trump card.

It could not have been very long after the pitiful death of beautiful Evelyn D'Alroy, when starring with him.

I went round to his dressing-room and, talking of her tragic death, he told me how bitterly he resented such an outrage—for so he described it. "She had no right to die," he declared. "She was young, she was lovely, she had a career before her, the stage cannot afford to lose such gifts. It is all wrong, it is all wrong." And he paced up and down his room beating his fist on the palm of his hand, a frequent trick of his when *shamming* emotion on the platform—but this was *real, very, very* real.

The last London appearance Waller made was with Gerald du Maurier at Wyndham's Theatre in *Gamblers All*. Only a few months later, when touring with the same play, he caught a chill which developed into pneumonia, and ended fatally after an illness that only lasted three days.

There were generally a few "comic cuts" strewn about Waller's touring companies. One drunken old reprobate he never could shake off. Anybody could have imposed upon Will's good nature, it was as impossible for him to say "No" as it would be for—well, you know who I mean—to say "Yes."

Anyway, the drink fellow arrived one night at the theatre much overcharged with spirits. He took the part of a butler in the play, and in the first act had to carry round coffee on a tray. The creature made his entrance with a lurch, the cups and saucers slithered about the salver, and finally he shot the whole lot of things on to Madge Titheradge's lap.

Waller really did appear to be furiously angry, and as the curtain came down he thundered out the most violent threats.

"I'll dismiss that brute. I've put up with him long enough. Send him to my room at once," he roared to his stage manager. Then he proceeded to apologize to Madge Titheradge, who couldn't speak, she was convulsed with laughter.

But the company had never seen the governor so wrath before, and they stood quaking in their shoes, waiting to hear how the tipsy "butler" fared.

Presently the man emerged, looking anything but the dejected object expected.

"Well?" they ejaculated together. "Tell us all about it. What has happened? Are you dismissed? What did he do? Speak out, man, speak out."

"Oh, the guv—hic—was most awfully sorry—hic—for me—hic—He has lent me two pounds—hic—and says he'll look at the salary list—hic—and see that I get a rise—hic—next week."

Now, can you wonder what Waller died a poor man? He had no more idea of the value of money than the extraordinarily well-built suit had which he sported in *Hawthorne U.S.A.*, the masterpiece which ran exactly four nights.

Waller wore that suit up the river one day, and a

stranger commented on its splendid fit and quality. "How much did it cost you, must have been fairly expensive, eh?" inquired the curious one.

"This suit? Oh, a mere trifle. Let me think—the production—four nights run—yes—it cost about two thousand. Quite cheap, don't you think so?" he replied coolly.

That was Waller all over. Happy-go-lucky, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, a true friend in distress, none of your fair weather acquaintanceship.

"*Put it right there, old chap,*" meant yours for keeps—yes, indeed, Lewis Waller was one of the very best.

CHAPTER XIX

CLEMENT SCOTT AND ARTHUR WING PINERO

IN 1893, when we first returned from America, somewhere about the end of June, one of the earliest unofficial invitations we received to visit his always hospitable theatre came from George Alexander, who was particularly keen to get Clement Scott's opinion about Arthur Wing Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and Mrs. Patrick Campbell's startling performance as Paula Tanqueray, the suicide lady.

How distinctly I can recall "Alex" coming to our box between the second and third act to know what he thought about it all. I don't know who had written the *Daily Telegraph* notice of the play; probably W. L. Courtney or Lionel Monckton; anyhow, the praise both of Pinero's work and that of the actress had been unstinted.

The public poured to the theatre to see the new Alexander production, and the evening we were there people were being turned away, from every part of the building—the place wasn't large enough to hold them.

But this did not affect the *Daily Telegraph* critic's opinion in the least. He loathed and hated the story of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. He detested pessimism in any form, and the Tanqueray, Ebbsmith, and *Gay Lord Quex* families were absolutely shunned by him as any pestilential disease would have been.

The *Illustrated London News* afforded him an outlet for his overburdened feelings on the subject, and he wrote a brilliant essay for its columns the following week.

In the *I. L. N.* article, Clement Scott took particular exception to some of the remarks made by Mrs. Tanqueray, attributing Pinero's change of mind from his hitherto well-balanced plays, to what he called the Ibsen reaction, with its unloveliness, its want of faith, its hopeless despairing creed, its worship of the ugly in art, and its grim and repulsive reality.

I wonder what he would have said to-day to such a hideous exhibition as Brioux's French drama *Les Avariés* done into English in this country and produced as *Damaged Goods*?

Does anybody think seriously that this kind of *sham sermonizing*, delivered as it was here in this country, can be of the slightest benefit to the cause? What utter nonsense—what feeble folly.

And I put it to you—is the theatre, the recognized home of *amusement and relaxation*—the place for these shockingly distressing and hideously morbid debates?

But let me get on with my story—shortly after Clement Scott had stated in the *Illustrated London News* his views of Pinero's play, somebody sent a letter, telling C. S. that *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* bore a remarkable resemblance to a Hun drama written by a well-known author named Paul Lindau. The title of the German story was *Der Schatten*.

This letter, with *excerpta* from the play which had also been forwarded, C. S. published in the *I. L. N.*, and the termination of this might well have originated in the topsy-turvy brain of a W. S. Gilbert—it was quite comical enough.

George Lewis, head of the eminent firm of Lewis and Lewis, who in the capacity of a brilliantly able lawyer earned for himself first a knighthood and then a baronetcy, happened to be a very old friend of Clement Scott's.

George Lewis had been his legal adviser for twenty years and more, and had acted for him in at least two celebrated libel actions, each of which he had succeeded in winning for his esteemed client.

Well, you may judge how we both laughed when amongst

the mail one morning while we were staying for a few days at Broadstairs a letter arrived re-addressed from the *D. T.* office, saying that the attention of Mr. Pinero had been drawn to the article in the *I. L. N.*, that he was greatly incensed thereby, and demanded a full and public apology from Clement Scott.

It added that if he were not prepared to offer this reparation, then Lewis and Lewis would be glad to receive the name of his solicitor, in order that an action for libel might be brought against him.

Now, think of this situation—Clement Scott's own lawyers threatening him with a libel action !

In answer to this letter Clement Scott wrote :

“ 10th September, 1893.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ You ask me for the name of my solicitors, in order to serve me with a writ for an action for libel instituted by my friend Mr. Pinero.

“ My solicitors, Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, of Ely Place, Holborn, are well known to you.

“ They have acted for me again and again *to my entire satisfaction.*

“ I have written to your principal, Sir George H. Lewis.

“ Yours,

“ CLEMENT SCOTT.”

To George Lewis he wrote a letter, and after congratulating him on some further honour he had received, he went on to say :

“ That you must be away from London now, I feel persuaded, for I have received a letter from your firm threatening me with an action for libel unless I apologize to my friend Arthur Pinero.

“ Our relations have hitherto been so confidential and cordial and our friendship so sincere, that I am astonished at the course that has been decided on. Had you been at the office I am sure you would have sent for me and

asked me for a satisfactory explanation, or at any rate told me on what ground you had decided *to bring an action against your own client*.

"I have discussed under my own signature a 'coincidence' which is still a literary 'coincidence,' and is held to be a 'coincidence' by scores of literary men in England and Germany, who would not dream of doubting Mr. Pinero's personal honour.

"You say that I have held Mr. Pinero up to public contempt and ridicule as a plagiarist. More than a fortnight ago I wrote a letter to the *Evening News and Post* protesting against any such insinuation, and declaring emphatically that Mr. Pinero was incapable of putting his name to a play that he had not invented.

"More than a fortnight ago I took the trouble to show in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* how ridiculous it was to accuse Mr. Pinero of borrowing the idea of his play from Emile Augier's *Marriage D'Olympe*, with which it had nothing in common whatever.

"On that occasion I paid Mr. Pinero the highest compliment.

"A week before the receipt of the letter from your firm threatening me with an action I wrote an exhaustive and analytical article in the *Illustrated London News* and used these words :

" 'Mr. Pinero has, in the frankest and most candid manner declared that neither directly nor indirectly has he ever heard of Lindau's play or its story. If he had done so he would have acknowledged it. No one doubts it.'

"What more does Mr. Pinero require? Does he require me to express my regret for the 'coincidence' that two authors independent of one another have hit on the same plot? For that is all I have said.

"For Mr. Pinero's work I have the very highest esteem, and I have said so in public over and over again, as he very well knows. But has it come to this, that when some of the old school do not like the dramatic tendency of the new school, we are to have a pistol placed at our

heads and be menaced with actions for libel unless we bow low to the modern idea ?

“ I will do anything you suggest to help to heal Mr. Pinero’s wounded feelings, and I regret that I have accidentally so wounded them, but I will not stifle my conscience or submit to be coerced at Mr. Pinero’s dictation.

“ I have to fight for my craft, as Mr. Pinero has to fight for his. I am at the head of my profession, as Mr. Pinero is at the head of his, but I should be a very mean-spirited person if I set the example of deliberately changing front on a serious literary controversy because I am threatened by a wealthy and successful man with the pains and penalties of the law.

“ You are perfectly at liberty to make whatever public use you like of this letter.

“ Yours,

“ CLEMENT SCOTT.”

In answer to this, George Lewis, after thanking him for his congratulations and telling him that he would have written before but that he had been away in the country, wrote :

“ Come along and have a chat with me at twelve o’clock on Wednesday morning. What a peppery lot you all are.”

The outcome of that Wednesday interview ended in a wholly friendly and satisfactory way. George Lewis, the clever creature, also invited Pinero to call at Ely Place at *quarter past* twelve, so that after he had talked things over with C. S., he then had a delightfully entertaining chat with the “ writer of plays,” and like two naughty children who had been quarrelling, he made them shake hands and promise to be better boys in the future.

It appears from this note from the great author that Christmas, even so far back as the early Eighties, could not have been a particularly festive holiday. Read what he says :

" 10 Marlborough Crescent,

" Bedford Park,

" Chiswick.

" December 23rd, 1884.

" MY DEAR SCOTT,

" I have seen Mr. French to-day, and he is to arrange for me to meet James and discuss with him his desires and requirements. I will let you know the result we arrive at.

" It is folly to wish men a Happy Christmas—one can only wish for a happy oblivion to its *dismal* memories and a freedom from its accompanying train of forebodings.

" It is more sensible to hope for a prosperous New Year and I desire most sincerely that '85 may be a golden number for you.

" Yours ever,

" A. W. PINERO."

This Lewis and Lewis coincidence reminds me of another story. It is French, so perhaps a little risky—*mais pourtant, c'est la vérité*—so here goes.

A certain well-known French actress had brought a company to London, and two or three times a week changed her programme, giving us an opportunity to see her in a very extensive and varied repertory.

Needless to say, that with such an artist in our midst we saw her as often as work permitted.

Wandering in and out of the Lyric—I think she was billeted there—we used frequently to meet a French dramatist, one of the handsomest men I think I have ever known.

Over and over again he would tap at the door of our box, come in for a few minutes and wax eloquent on the extraordinary clever acting of a member of the company.

For some time we didn't grasp the situation. But at last the opportunity came, when this particular member of the company acted with more than usual distinction, and looked a perfect dream.

Oh, I must tell you that I had written to invite the

dramatist to luncheon the following day, and as the time did not permit of post, had asked him to send me his answer by hand in the morning.

C. S. expressed his delight in the *Daily Telegraph* with the performance—it had been a wonderful evening altogether, and he also devoted several lines to singing the praises of the aforementioned clever member of the great actress's company.

Before eleven o'clock, I had a note from the Frenchman to tell me he would be enchanted to take luncheon with us, and you know how in hotels, whenever letters are sent out by hand, the number of the apartment is written in the corner of the envelope so that the charge for same may be correctly entered.

The envelope addressed to me bore the Number 125.

About half an hour later Clement Scott sent me a letter by his secretary which he wanted me to read—it came from the beautiful lady in the French company and gave expressions, unlimited, of gratitude for the way he had spoken of her in the *Daily Telegraph*.

As I put the letter back in its envelope and turned it round in my hand, a sudden light dawned on me. I glanced at it again. Yes, I had not made any mistake. I took up the note received a short time before from the Frenchman and compared the two.

Both corners of both envelopes bore the same number—125.

Did I tell C. S. ?

Why, of course I did.

Did he tell our visitor ?

Why, of course he did.

And did we *all* laugh ?

Why, of course we did.

Que voulez-vous que je vous dise, moi ?

CHAPTER XX

CHARLES WYNDHAM

PLAY-LOVERS who followed closely the career of Charles Wyndham, who shed tears of laughter over his inimitable humour in risky French farces, and tears of sympathy when from farce he jumped to comedy, and from comedy to the pathos of Sir Jasper Thorndyke in that tenderly human Parker-Carson dramatic poem, *Rosemary*, were truly grieved when they knew that their idol of the Criterion had decided in the winter of his life to quit the dear little home where he had made faithful friends, fame and fortune, and start afresh at his newly-built theatre—Wyndham's in the Charing Cross Road.

Charles Wyndham in his various moods has been compared to two of the very finest actors that the English stage can boast of in the last three quarters of a century—Charles Mathews and Edward Askew Sothorn.

Wyndham in his first early farce period possessed much of the mercurial spirits and intense vivacity of Mathews. The delight and style of this "Electric Light" comedian's predecessor can only be described in the words of an old theatre-goer who saw him act one night, and heard as he went out of the house that the reckless, charming, devil-may-care artist had been declared a bankrupt.

"That man a bankrupt!" exclaimed the "stallholder," "then it is a disgrace to England that she doesn't pay his debts."

Such was the personal charm exercised over the people by Charles Mathews.

And Charles Wyndham could boast every ounce of his attractiveness. In fact, the delightfully humorous vein was even more pronounced in Wyndham than in Mathews.

And Charles Wyndham not only excelled as an actor, but as a stage manager and a most "discreet editor" as well.

Without the judgment and tact of Wyndham, where would have been the success in England of Dumas *filis*, *L'Ami des Femmes*, adapted so naturally for our stage by one of the most brilliant of all our playwrights, R. C. Carton?

Who can ever forget the storm of applause which followed the scene between the heiress and *The Squire of Dames*, acted to such refined perfection by that exquisitely sweet-voiced artist, Fay Davis—the American "Out West" girl, who had never in her life appeared in any theatre before except as a reciter—and Charles Wyndham, whose fascinating persuasiveness simply enchanted everyone present.

Again, Charles Wyndham possessed the power to *make* actors and actresses. Has Julia Neilson ever been seen to better advantage in the whole of her stage career than when she was with Wyndham in Claud Carton's *Home Secretary*? The change from her usual style when she came under the sway of such an instructor as Wyndham has been without parallel.

The actress became transformed, and never played so admirably before as she did in this sentimental play.

But all this happened long after Charles Wyndham had made his name and fame as the best farce actor and most facile comedian of his time.

At the Criterion Clement Scott helped considerably in preparing one of Wyndham's first and biggest successes in conjunction with Arthur Mathison, to wit, *The Great Divorce Case*. I believe C. S. dubbed himself John Doe on this occasion.

After that came other Parisian farces—I'm not attempting to put them in their order—such as *Brighton*, *The Pink Dominos*, which made a furore owing to the "slating"



CHARLES WYNDHAM.

it received on moral grounds, and *Betsy*. Oh! if you could but have seen Lottie Venne in this delicious French concoction, called in the Gay City *Bébé*, which, by the way, has been exploited again by Max Pemberton and Eustace Ponsonby to the accompaniment of music, you'd have appreciated acting in all its most fascinating sense.

French farces in those days were quite as risky as they are to-day. At the Criterion though, Wyndham knew how to act them, and if he wasn't cast in them himself he knew how to produce them.

He never gave you time to think or ponder over inconsistencies—call them “shockingnesses” if you prefer to do so. French farces, Anglicized, are made ugly and impossible to-day because the wrong people are engaged to act in them, and they don't understand the art of the Palais Royale school. *Charles Wyndham did, and that's the difference.*

If you liked to take scrip for scrip, page for page, and sentence for sentence you could possibly turn most of the old Criterion farces ever seen there into something verging on the improper; Charles Wyndham and his “comrade in crime,” Francis Cowley Burnand, who did the bulk of the foreign farcical adaptations for him at one time, were not knighted by their sovereign for writing and producing improper plays, but because their plays were screamingly funny, deliciously witty, and delightfully humorous.

By the way, thinking of how an artist can help an author, I distinctly remember Henry Arthur Jones sending along the printed book of “*The Case of Rebellious Susan*” for Clement Scott to read. It arrived just as we were sitting down to dinner—or rather the meal so-called, for we were due at the Criterion within a little while, and on first nights C. S. was far too excited to think of food. He skimmed through the pages as we sat at table, reading out sentences and passages haphazard.

It seemed to him, so he remarked, to be a play without fibre or stamina, a play thin as a thread. The dialogue

sparkled with good things, and the prominent figure Henry Arthur Jones had named Richard Kato.

The Case of Rebellious Susan proved to be one of the Wyndham trump cards. He "centralized" the entire comedy. He dominated, he silenced, he ruled, and above all he dazzled his audience with his masterful study of Richard Kato, Q.C. From the easy way he argued his points and tossed his "witnesses" about you might well have imagined that he had really and truly practised in the Divorce Court for a quarter of a century.

With all due respect to the company in the revival of Henry Arthur Jones' play *The Liars* which appeared at the St. James' not so very long ago in this—as we thought when it was acted at the Criterion by Charles Wyndham and pretty Mary Moore and Company—exceptionally clever comedy—I wonder what the author's feelings were about it, and how often he compared notes?

Speaking of this work reminds me of the less lucky manager passing the old "Cri" while H. A. J.'s play was being presented there, and seeing all along the outside of the theatre these announcements—"Stalls full," "Boxes full," "Balcony full," etc., etc.

Looking up over the door he read the title, and shaking his fist at it he muttered, "*THE LIARS*."

At the back of the Criterion stage, in the old days, Charles Wyndham had one of the rooms fitted up in an altogether original fashion. It resembled the perfect imitation of a dining saloon on board a yacht. There were portholes with little silk curtains, a long narrow ship's table, and everything as complete as it could well be.

The only and very decided improvement being that *we were stationary*. We didn't have to catch things coming and going, and nobody suffered from *mal de mer*. I wonder what that room is used for now?

Wyndham entertained lavishly in this comfortable apartment, and gave the merriest luncheon and supper parties there.

Many a happy hour I have spent in that favoured spot with the cheery doyen of managers as mine host.

At one time Charles used to drive a pair of spanking big horses in a phaeton, then a most fashionable conveyance.

Wyndham felt naturally extremely proud of his possessions, as it didn't fall to the lot of every theatrical gentleman to sport so wealthy a turn-out; they couldn't afford such luxuries. But all the élite of society had claimed Charles Wyndham as one of their own by that time, and his popularity could not be disputed.

At a gay supper one evening, he drew a vivid picture of his dangerous drive with the two frisky animals across Hampstead Heath. Something had startled the fiery steeds, and they were running away like mad; but Wyndham's hands were light, he knew how to manipulate the ribbons, and just as he arrived at the crucial moment, Burnand, his eyes gleaming with fun, asked:

"Hampstead Heath did you say, Charles?"

"Yes, yes. Let me get on."

"Wait a bit, old man—*ARE YOU SURE THEY WERE HORSES?*"

Poor Wyndham, his story never got finished, but how we laughed!

Considering the praise and compliments he generally received after first nights, it seemed amazing how sensitive he remained to criticism.

He'd deluge you with letters of argument if your views did not quite coincide with his.

On one occasion, when a play of his had been received unfavourably, he tried to keep every critic out of his theatre.

The consequence was that, headed by Clement Scott, the whole lot paid for their seats and glowered at him triumphantly from the first row of the pit.

Wyndham never tried it on again. That cured him.

I fancy this first letter must have been written after the production of *The Squire of Dames*, as the part which Mary Moore played did not suit her very well and I don't think the actress herself cared very much for the character.

I quote it to show that Charles Wyndham did not disown his qualifications to "argue," but on the contrary he admitted them.

" Criterion Theatre,
 " Piccadilly, W.

" Yes, my dear Clement, I am more than satisfied ; nor was there anything whatever in my letter to lead you to think that my sense of gratitude had been weakened.

" Surely you know my combative disposition better. When I want to complain, I do not waste powder on a private letter.

" I merely wished you, till I was prevented, to draw attention to the significant fact that the lady was so ill that the unusual method of rehearsing was altered. Nor was she, as you suggest, displeased ; on the contrary, she is in the somewhat unsatisfactory ' crowing ' condition that finds relief in ' I told you so.'

" Briefly, she recognized instinctively what she didn't and doesn't know as a fact (nor you either, apparently) : that the part is not regarded by French actresses with affection, it being recognized by them that she is only a lay feeder for the light comedian, with little individuality, and less independent inspiration—still more is this so in the English version, where for the exigencies of the fifth curtain, this ' fine comedy part ' *must not smile* for two entire acts—must only be faintly joyous in Act 1, and lugubrious in Act 4. She has therefore never ceased to tell us that she was unsuited for the part, and your criticism supports her theory.

" The one most affected is the representative of the companion part—Gould—who is very unhappy. Strictly speaking—both are most thankless (a long running word I cannot possibly make out) parts.

" But the main object of this correspondence you have overlooked entirely—and please don't.

" *WHEN SHALL WE MEET ?*

" That is more important to us both, and let us hope also to the public than our respective views of a past and gone representation. Let me know like a good fellow.

" Yours ever,

" CHAS. WYNDHAM."

“Telegraphic address,
‘Citharas,’ London.”

“Criterion Theatre,
“Piccadilly, W.”

“MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

“Delighted to find you can come on Wednesday.

“Practically speaking, I have only three boxes at my disposal, so it is no difficult feat when, as in the present rush, they are so quickly snapped up.

“I understand Scott lost interest in the piece since the new light was put on it. Tell him not to do so. The new light means thanks to Jones, for kindly omitting a couple of lines that really made my holiday a misery.

“I have before me a letter from a clergyman who saw, so he tells me, no wrong whatever except a breach of the Third Commandment. As soon as my staff, who are woefully ignorant, my dear Mrs. Scott, have reported to me what the Third Commandment is, I shall study the question and answer the Rev. gentleman, who, by the way, writes most kindly.

“Why are you not supping here with me? Scott would surely know—and it is three hours since I ordered the report and there is none to hand.

“Yours on and after Wednesday,

“CHARLES WYNDHAM.”

For several years before he died Charles Wyndham's memory had been gradually failing him, until at last he only stared at his oldest friends with a vacant gaze, and failed to recognize them.

It must have been possibly a year before his death that he was met by a brother artist, who challenged him as to his identity.

“You don't remember me, Charles, do you?”

“Yes, yes I do: Don't prompt me, wait a bit.”

“Well, I'm waiting.”

“I know—actor—white hair—*LIVES WITH HIS WIFE.*”

Charles Wyndham did remember that—and nobody prompted him.

CHAPTER XXI

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL

AND

“THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY”

ARTHUR WING PINERO, by his marvellous intuitive-ness in “casting” his plays, has brought several hitherto unknown actresses well within the glare of the limelight.

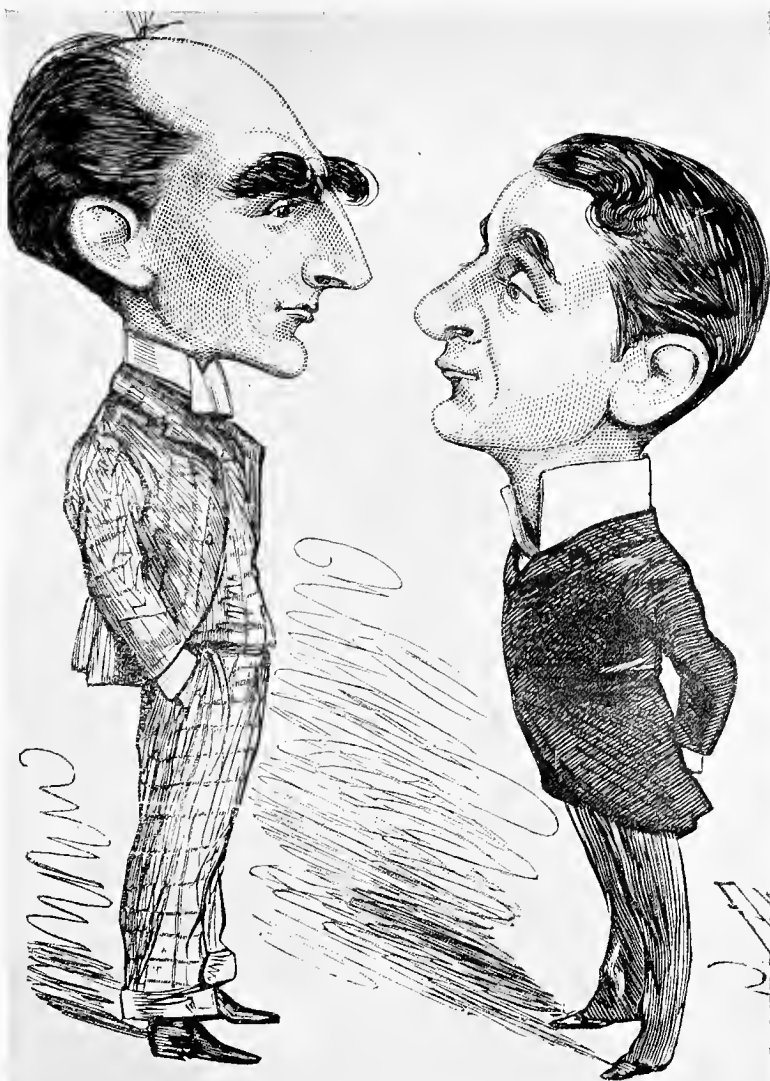
Some have been gifted enough to remain there, but others, fondly dreaming of their talents, and attributing little or nothing to the author, have lived to realize their error, have been forced to fall silently into the back lines again, where they are, comparatively speaking, forgotten.

Pinero is a positive genius at unearthing precisely the right person to suit the people he has created in his own mind. He has been more successful in this direction with actresses than with actors—in fact, I cannot remember any of his *serious* plays in which the men were not dominated by the women. His studies have usually been elaborately fanciful, extraordinarily entertaining, but rarely warm-blooded or very human.

With Henry Arthur Jones this position as a rule has been exactly reversed. His people, and more particularly the men folk, were very much alive and living.

Take as instance Wilson Barrett in *The Silver King*, Edward Willard's *Middleman*, his *Judah*, Charles Wyndham in *The Liars*, in *The Case of Rebellious Susan* and in *Mrs. Dane's Defence*. They were all real beings, every one of them with the powerful pulse of life throbbing through every vein.

Pinero's “children” more creatures of imagination,



MESSRS. A. W. PINERO AND J. HARE.

and only left an abiding impression when they were attached to some vivid personality.

I often wonder what would have happened to Mrs. Patrick Campbell if Pinero had not written the *Second Mrs. Tanqueray*? Would she have drifted on and on, and on, as one of the many “*capable*” artists with which the market is so overstocked at present?

Can’t you see the baskets loaded with them, and labelled: “All the same size. Medium. Sweet?”

And that is just as they are spoken of. Sweet. But something more than “sweet” is required for the making of a good actress.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell’s stage history is most interesting—at least, I mean from the time when Clement Scott received an invitation from John Hare to accompany him to Colchester and see Miss Laura Johnson—a member of Ben Greet’s company—playing the part of Julia in *The Hunchback*.

Herman Vezin suggested they should go, as Hare was at his wits’ end to find a leading lady for his new play at the Garrick Theatre when it first opened under his management.

Miss Johnson, very bright and very clever, had not the temperament necessary for the new piece, but both John Hare and Clement Scott were most favourably impressed with another actress in the cast—a Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who appeared as Helen.

She had style, she had manner, she had a touch of genius that fascinated.

“Here, believe me, is an actress of the future. If you have the opportunity, engage her and bring her up to London,” said C. S. to John Hare.

John Hare did admire her, he did recognize her talent, but the opportunity did not occur for her at that moment, so far as he was concerned.

The chance came when they were in need of a powerful actress at the Adelphi.

The brothers Gatti, Agostino and Stefano, two of the kindest and most charitable theatrical managers, con-

sulted Clement Scott, who told them he had seen a very remarkable artist in one of Ben Greet's companies.

They engaged Mrs. Patrick Campbell on the instant. She appeared at the Adelphi with distinguished success, and bore out all that the two experts in the art of acting thought of her. She became the heroine of the best of the George R. Sims melodramas.

A passage written by Clement Scott states: "In a 'Sunday Special' it is recorded that Mrs. Patrick Campbell 'unbosomed herself' to an American interviewer, with some details of her dramatic career, and is supposed to have said, 'One day I walked into a London theatrical agency. Hundreds of girls have done the same, so they know how it feels. I had their same tremors, their same hopes, their same fears. I paid out my guinea, and the agent put my name on his books.'

"Very pretty, very natural, very much in accordance with the successful theatrical artist *who forgets*.

"Then these casual remarks are added:

"My health broke down under the strain.

"Then I went to the Adelphi.

"I never had a letter of introduction to anyone, and I had no society influence. It was just work and luck—and perhaps some talent.

"At all events, ten years have given me the right to play the things I love.'"

No one can deny Mrs. Patrick Campbell's success, and very justifiable success, too. She is nearly always admirable and graceful in her art. The lightning rapidity with which she flashed from the Adelphi home of popular melodrama to the St. James' and George Alexander's fashionable theatre, is an absolutely phenomenal event in stage history.

I have before me a charming and pretty little pleading letter from Mrs. Patrick Campbell to Clement Scott. In it she begs for his advice:

"The Gattis want me to sign for a year at £12 a week. I don't like the idea at all, as my part in the new play is

very bad." Then she says more, and finally asks him plaintively, "What am I to do? Do please advise me, and forgive my troubling you."

Quite a nervous apprehensiveness in the last words. But, heigh presto! a very short time after the receipt of that note, on the recommendation of his brilliantly business-like little wife, and backed up by the author of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, both of whom had paid a visit to the Adelphi to see its distinguished and handsome leading lady, George Alexander was offering Mrs. Patrick Campbell more than twice double this amount, and begging and imploring her to appear at his theatre in the name part of what some wise persons dubbed an "epoch-making" play. Where's the epoch, and what's it done for the benefit of the stage?

That character conceived by Arthur Wing Pinero made Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and *Mrs. Patrick Campbell most certainly made Pinero's play*. She has never had any part to suit her temperament quite so well since. As *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, she gave a remarkably fine performance, but it could not be compared with *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

I am unable to recall the reason why, during the still great financial gain of this last-named Pinero play, Mrs. Patrick Campbell suddenly announced that she was leaving the St. James'.

Whether her "tenancy" expired under contract and she had to appear in some other playhouse, I cannot remember. I only know facts as they occurred.

The work to follow on at George Alexander's "society" theatre came from the able pen of Henry Arthur Jones. Its title was *The Masqueraders*, and the Sunday after the production Mrs. Oscar Beringer gave a luncheon at her house in Hinde Street, Manchester Square.

The time of the year I leave to you, as I call to mind the entrance of the Beerbohm Trees when we were already seated at table, and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree's greeting to everybody:

"It's Herbert's birthday, and I've given him a watch."

After this, and as the watch evidently didn't keep good time, we returned to the subject of our interrupted conversation, namely, Clement Scott's "naughty" notice in the *Daily Telegraph* of *The Masqueraders*.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell's performance as the heroine, Dulcie Laronda, had been a dreadful disappointment to everybody.

After every fourth line running the whole gamut of the column, Clement had inquired innocently? "But where was Dulcie Laronda?" so and so, and so and so, "but where was Dulcie Laronda?" so and so, and so and so, "but where was Dulcie Laronda?" until you absolutely felt that she had been run over, or perhaps tumbled out of a window; anyway, that something disastrous had occurred.

So far as the *character* of Dulcie was concerned, she did not live for an instant in the actress's imagination.

A colourless, apathetic, ghost-like, inanimate, shadowy something, "spectred" on and off the stage at intervals—that was all.

Whether George Alexander, the mischievous rogue, purposely induced Mrs. Patrick Campbell to appear as Dulcie Laronda to assure us that there were *limitations* to her talents, and that Paula Tanqueray was merely a happy chance, I don't know. As I have said before, I can but tell you facts as they occurred.

When Mrs. Campbell went to the States for the first time as an actress, she must have been rather surprised to read some of her critics' opinions, and their original mode of expressing them.

From a leading American journal I have in front of me now, this is how she is described:

"Mrs. Pat is a pale, poster-like lady. She has the most beautiful clothes. She wears them with a grace and distinction that ought to make the dressmakers and the dress worshippers bow down and adore her with an intense and absorbing devotion.

"There is never one instant, from the rise of the curtain to the fall thereof, when Mrs. Campbell is not a stunning and a fascinating thing for the eye to rest upon.

"She is graceful as the serpent upon the rock, and as confusing to the senses as the attar of roses, or the white gleam of the dying orchid.

"Burne-Jones admired her wan and wasted style of beauty, and as for Aubrey Beardsley, he made it so much his own that no one can look at Mrs. Campbell in one of her characteristic, long-armed poses without being haunted by the ghost of the wondrous boy who died before he was a man.

"But her subtlety stops with the service of the eye.

"As soon as she begins to speak the spell is broken," etc., etc., etc.

That is the kind of so-called criticism one had to be prepared to face in the States during the Nineties and the beginning of this century.

Things are somewhat better there since C. S. wrote for the *New York Herald*, and impressed the people with the serious tone he adopted about the theatre, although he himself came in for his full share of America's opinion of him. One irate gentleman, "postmarked" from Philadelphia, addressed a fiery communication to the newspaper's dramatic editor at the office in Herald Square :

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,

"Will you have the goodness to let us know who this Clement Scott is ? Is he the Lord God Almighty, that he is allowed to spread himself over your pages in this dictatorial manner ? If he is, then we are bound to back him up in his opinions, but if he is not, will you be good enough to give him a free passage back to his own country, and permit us to rest peacefully in ours ?

"Faithfully yours,
"J. H. H."

"The *New York Herald*,

"Herald Square,

"New York City."

But this is only by the way.

The point that George Alexander undoubtedly proved, when he cast Mrs. Patrick Campbell for Dulcie Laronda in the Henry Arthur Jones drama, was this: that even if Mrs. Campbell helped to make *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* more a success of individuality than Miss Elizabeth Robins would have done, had she played the part as originally cast, but which she nobly relinquished for love of art and admiration for the author's work, it is undeniable that *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* brought Mrs. Patrick Campbell into prominence and made her famous.

The same actress could not touch the character of the heroine in Henry Arthur Jones' play, and wouldn't have earned a line of praise for her performance; and I have a shrewd idea that George Alexander, being a keen man of affairs, knew and thoroughly appreciated the position.

On the other hand, and in quite a different style altogether, Mrs. Patrick Campbell undoubtedly "filled" *The Thirteenth Chair*, and made it a wonderfully interesting and absorbing study. I don't know another English actress on the stage to-day who could have tackled the personality of that "trick" woman with the firmness and grip of the character that she did.

The desperate fight for the life of her child and her child's honour held you spellbound. At that moment Mrs. Patrick Campbell elevated an indifferent and tawdry piece of melodrama to the realms of strong, magnificent drama. Her impersonation became so real that you almost thought you were enjoying a fine play, but it was really nothing of the kind.

That is where Mrs. Patrick Campbell's talent stepped in. She held you in the palm of her artistic hand—she never let go of you, but bounced you hither and thither just as she pleased.

And, again, that is why those who have followed and know Mrs. Patrick Campbell's genius—when she is pleased to exert it—and remember her performance as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, must realize that she herself was the embodiment of the individual.



From an engraving]

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL AND FORBES ROBERTSON.

[By permission of Marion & Co.,

Facing p. 204.

No other actress has ever played the part as she did, no other actress has ever succeeded with it as she did, for Mrs. Campbell knew the woman by nature. She looked the woman in appearance, she lived on the stage as the woman in reality. She was wonderful, and theatrical London went mad about her.

But in *The Thirteenth Chair* Mrs. Pat had to use all her art to make a serious, interesting play from three acts of very cheap, trivial and commonplace material. She had to create atmosphere, *and the right atmosphere*; she had to strike a chord of harmony where all would otherwise have been discord. She succeeded beyond success, and fairly startled everybody by sheer cleverness and talent.

In one little note to Clement Scott Mrs. Patrick Campbell says :

“ I have this moment seen the *Illustrated London News*.
How happily you word !

“ How grateful I am to you, and how unworthy I feel !

“ Yours ever,

“ S. P. C.”

How Clement Scott would have praised her artistic triumph and remarkable appearance in *The Thirteenth Chair* ! But then how few critics understood the art of acting as he did.

CHAPTER XXII

FRED LESLIE

WELL do I remember, wrote Clement Scott, the day when, under a burning sun in the Egyptian desert, a small party of homesick English men and women heard of the death of one of the greatest artists of our time, FRED LESLIE.

The news came to us suddenly and curtly from a stranger in the corner of the railway carriage, when, half suffocated with the intolerable heat and blinded with maddening dust, we were making the best of our way from Cairo to Ismailia, there to join the P. and O. Ship *Bengal*, that was to transport a hitherto merry party of newly-made friends to Bombay and the Far East.

The blow fell on us all as a dreadful shock, but most of all on me, for I had followed the career of Fred Leslie from the Alhambra days, when he came to us as an ambitious boy, to the perfected time of the Gaiety, when I had, during my last nights in London, gone to Box 14 time after time simply to hear him sing the romance of the "Looking Glass," and to roar with laughter over the final glee, "The Moon has got his Trousers on" !

Fred Leslie dead ! I could think of nothing else. My companions shook off the intelligence with a few feeling words of regret ; they were busy pointing out the battle-fields of Tel-el-Kebir and the scene of the midnight charge at Kassassin. But I sat moodily in a corner of the carriage, gazing, gazing across the desert and thinking of home and the dead artist.

Perchance they were not quite so lonely in their thoughts as I was. They, indeed, had no tender memories of delightful evenings at the Gaiety ; they had no intimate associations with Box 14, and possibly they did not quite understand what the word "death" meant to one thousands of miles from home and travelling without a companion or "chum."

It must have been a shock even to one who loved him for his art ; but to an intimate friend of the lost genius who had "eclipsed the Gaiety" of London, the shock was loaded heavily with pain.

In the course of my travels I was destined to hear very much more of the brilliant actor who had been suddenly taken away, and to understand what deep sympathy exists everywhere in the great world of art.

We discussed Fred Leslie over our tiffin, or dinner, at the Byculla Club ; we drank to his memory at a dismal Christmas dinner—four art-loving Englishmen at the beautiful Yacht Club at Bombay.

But perhaps the most touching tribute to his greatness I heard one lovely evening, when the good ship *Rohilla* sailed away from Singapore to Hong Kong.

At a leave-taking on the quay of the capital of this beautiful island, I was trying to encourage some very homesick residents by envying them a life under the palms and cocoanut trees away from the fogs and damps and dews of England.

One man rejected my well-meant enthusiasm scornfully, and with tears starting to his eyes he said :

"Yes, yes, all very well. But I wish to God I were going back to dear old London. And yet, London will never be quite the same to me, exile as I am, *for dear Fred Leslie is dead!*"

Few actors of my time have been so universally loved by men and women alike. You will very rarely find an actor who is popular with the "boys" and who is also idolized by the women.

Harry Montague was a case in point. The women fell in love with him, and his friends would have died for

him ; but even Harry Montague did not possess that strange mixture of manly vigour, muscular force, athletic bearing and feminine tenderness that belonged emphatically to Fred Leslie.

The elder Sothern, "Dundreary" Sothern, was a manly fellow, and a mighty Nimrod, but he lacked the softness and the gentleness of Leslie's nature.

Edward Askew Sothern's son Lytton was as much beloved in his set as his father had been before him ; but in the admixture of those opposite qualities of manly strength and womanly tenderness Fred Leslie outdistanced them all.

I believe that the great artistic qualities of Leslie never came to fruition until his first visit to America. That was the making of him.

What is American humour ? No one has defined it, and yet we all know its pungent qualities.

Edward Sothern the elder might have remained a stock actor at Weymouth or Birmingham all his life had he not visited America. America developed the latent humour of "Dundreary" Sothern. The same with Fred Leslie.

He went there a young, clever and impressionable fellow. He came back a humorist.

Each visit to America more strongly strengthened his talent, fortified his invention, and established his admitted genius.

I hear some people say, "Ah, yes, but he composed some of his best songs and played some of his best characters before ever he went to America."

Quite so. But the study of American humour suggested to him exactly the things that were to him most humorous.

If this were not so, how was it that America took to Fred Leslie the moment he was seen there, and the little irritability caused by the appearance of the Gaiety company melted away directly Leslie stepped upon the scene ?

Because there was something in Leslie's talent redolent of that extraordinary readiness that is characteristic of American humour.

America was undoubtedly the stepping-stone to Leslie's great and distinguished career.

Fred Leslie was one of the finest lyric and comic artists of my time. He gave taste, tone and charm to all he attempted.

A halo of art perpetually surrounded him, and I am not one of those who maintain that art is the special prerogative of tragedians and the idols of the theatre with an "educational mission."

I have acknowledged art, and art by no means to be despised, in the once ostracized music-hall, and also in the penny booth.

Leslie was not less an artist or genius because he helped to redeem burlesque from the ignominy of brainless men with heels, and women with more beauty than brains.

He unfortunately made the one conspicuous mistake of believing that being a genius he could do everything in any branch of art without experience or training. He would have been a delightful comedian had he practised. But tragedy and comedy have their rules, their grammar, as well as burlesque.

Genius is the polishing point. It is the inspiration, the glow, the colour of an artist, but it cannot make up for faulty mechanism.

Fred Leslie played *Sir Peter Teazle*, *David Garrick* and *Sir John Vesey*, and nearly broke his heart because he did not at once startle the town.

I believe he could have played them all, and played them admirably, with practice and study, but not on the principle of Mr. Wemmick :

"Hullo ! Here's a church ! Let's get married !"

With artist or genius it can never be a case of "Hullo ! Here's a part ! Let's play it !"

When Leslie saw a fat man he immediately wanted to play Falstaff ; but looking at everything in a broad and comprehensive spirit, I think we must own that Fred Leslie did all he possibly could during the few brilliant years allotted to him as his span of life.

Had he lived longer, who shall say what he might not

have accomplished ? That is not a question that anyone can answer.

It is, at any rate, a more comforting and edifying reflection that in his short and busy life he nobly used the wondrous gifts God had bestowed on him ; that he never degraded the calling that he chose, nor defiled the artistic path that blossomed at his feet.

CHAPTER XXIII

VICTORIEN SARDOU'S "DORA"

BOLTON AND SAVILLE ROWE'S "DIPLOMACY"

A REMARKABLE and unprecedented circumstance about *Diplomacy* is that, notwithstanding Victorien Sardou's violent abuse of Bolton and Saville Rowe for having "butchered" and destroyed his play *Dora*, the original French work should be dead and the English adaptation as alive to-day as it was over forty years ago, when the Bancrofts produced it at the Prince of Wales', Tottenham Court Road. Now, in place of the once old-fashioned little theatre there stands the beautifully built and elegantly-designed Scala, transformed by its present owner, Dr. Distin Maddick.

Ages ago I asked Squire Bancroft to let me do a suburban tour with *Diplomacy*, never dreaming for an instant that he would refuse me. But he was perfectly frank as to his reason for doing so, and told me that every "so many years" he could safely count on the English play for a London run; and if I took it round the suburbs, I *might*—he didn't say I should, but the possibility existed that I *might*—jeopardize its popularity here in the City, as a vast number of people from the outlying districts would not come into town if they had already seen the piece.

I don't know how many times *Diplomacy* has been revived since my request, but on each occasion its success has never been disputed.

Charles Coghlan and his sister Rose made a pleasant fortune touring America with it, and the Bancrofts them-

selves acknowledge it to have been their highest trump card during the whole of their wonderful management.

The Sardou and Scott controversy is funny.

"In reference to the misunderstanding which exists between M. Victorien Sardou and one of the gentlemen who adapted *Dora* for the Prince of Wales' Theatre, I am asked," says the editor of the *Figaro*, "to extend the hospitality of my columns, and to publish facts as they are.

"Replying in the affirmative, I also offer a similar welcome to Clement Scott, should that gentleman think fit to reply, and it must not be forgotten that in thus holding the scales evenly between the two parties, the Almaguira of to-day disclaims all share in the dispute with the original Almaguira of this journal, who was Clement Scott himself."

M. M. L. Mayer, the French dramatist's agent in London, writes as follows :

"A long article from the pen of one of the adaptors of *Dora* refers to the greatest dramatist of the day in this style :

" 'French authors are absolutely ignorant of the requirements of the English stage ; they know nothing about it, and no French play has succeeded in this country until it has been altered and moulded by an experienced English writer.'

"In reply to this, I need only mention, without reference to the past, some of the pieces now being performed in this country : *The Two Orphans* (very much adapted by John Oxenford of the *Times*), *Proof* (also very much cut for the English stage by F. C. Burnand), *The Pink Dominos* (which would not have been licensed in this country, literally translated from the French), *Les Cloches de Corneville*, etc., etc."

"The critic proceeds to say : 'Amongst the writers bitten with this frenzied gadfly is M. Victorien Sardou. He inserts a ridiculous clause in the agreement to the effect that the English adaptor must submit to him, M. Sardou, all alterations he desires to make.'

"In reply to what appears so ridiculous to Mr. Clement Scott, I can only say that I must think him 'bitten' by the above clause insisted upon verbally by Sardou, and 'bitten' again, and this time very severely, by the verdict of the pen of the author of *Dora* against the adaptors of that play, as the following letter will show :

" 'MON CHER M. MAYER,—Il est absolument faux comme dit le journal *L'Era* que j'aie désigné par l'intermédiaire de Mr. C. Harris, Messrs. Clement Scott et Stephenson pour traducteurs de ma pièce, *Poudre d'Or*.'

" 'Je ne connais pas M. Harris, et quant à Messrs. Scott et Stephenson, je les connais trop bien pour avoir dénaturé ma pièce de *Dora* de la façon la plus ridicule, en se permettant d'y supprimer des scènes entières. Il est inutile d'ajouter que ce n'est pas de tels traducteurs que je vais choisir.

" 'Agréé, etc.,

" 'V. SARDOU.'

To this letter Clement Scott published the translated message sent by M. Mayer to Sardou, congratulating him on the enormous success of *Diplomacy* at the Prince of Wales' Theatre.

From M. Mayer to M. Sardou :

"*Dora*, under the title of *Diplomacy*, represented last evening at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, has obtained an immense success. The adaptors refused to appear at the conclusion, and the play was ascribed to its real author. At the name of Sardou the whole house rose and applauded again and again."

M. Sardou's reply :

"Thanks for your news. I beg you to thank for me most cordially, adaptors, management and artists. I am very happy for, and very proud of, their success and mine."

These compliments are in fierce contrast with the present inimical feeling manifested by M. Sardou towards the adaptors of *Dora*, and, doubtless, rising out of Clement

Scott's verdict upon the play M. Sardou had sold to Messrs. Gatti for translation and production at the Adelphi.

Clement Scott, in the exercise of his free and unbiassed judgment, failed to discover in *La Poudre d'Or* sufficient merit to justify him in recommending its definite purchase, and declined in any event to undertake the responsibility of adapting the drama for representation in London.

In this regard it cannot be questioned that Clement Scott was actuated by motives which reflect credit on his sense of delicacy; but his adverse criticism gave great umbrage to M. Sardou, who suddenly discovered that the adaptors of *Dora* had mutilated that play, and totally misrepresented his idea in writing it. Moreover, M. Sardou has stipulated in his negotiations with Messrs. Gatti that in the translation of *La Poudre d'Or* no changes whatever should be made without his sanction.

In these circumstances, even had the play satisfied the critical exigencies of Clement Scott, he could not, with self-respect, have accepted the office of literal translator, which anyone acquainted with the two languages could have filled equally well.

So far as concerns the injury inflicted upon *Dora* in the play entitled *Diplomacy*, it is sufficient to point out the significant fact that whilst the original play has long since disappeared from the programme of the Paris Vaudeville, the adaptation has only recently been running at the Prince of Wales' Theatre and its popularity has not yet waned.

Rather quaint to read these words written over forty years ago, and to know that even now, as proved when it was last revived at Wyndham's Theatre a year or two ago, *Diplomacy* still has life and body in it.

After the first night of its production at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre, Edmund Yates wrote some extraordinarily witty lines, bringing in all the names of the celebrities, and others, too, who were present in the auditorium.

I believe the whole set of verses is quoted in the Ban-

crofts' book, but I have only the lines here which have reference to the adaptors of *Dora* :

"What is the piece? DIPLOMACY; adapted by the ROWES
 From "DORA," SARDOU'S last success, as everybody knows;
 'Under the Rose,' the ROWES are merely *noms de plume*; all wot
 That 'Bolton's' Charley Stephenson, while Saville's Clement Scott.
 Their partnership's successful, too, in spite of cynics' snarls,
 For careful Clement polishes the rough work done by Charles;
 While Charley modifies the tropes which Clement turns with ease,
He's sat at Edwin Arnold's feet, and writes Telegraphese.
 Here's Gilbert, overflowing with all human kindness' milk;
 And Montagu, who rumour says will speedily take silk;
 And here is George from Ely Place, the man of brain and 'nous'
 Who knows enough to hang full half the people in the house.
 Here's Holmes from Hadrow;—here's—but stop; there goes the
 prompter's bell,
 And now we'll listen to the tale the Rows have got to tell.

—Edmund Yates.

The programme states that

On Saturday, January 12th, 1878, for the first time, will be acted a
 play in four Acts, called

DIPLOMACY.

Adapted for the English stage from M. Victorien Sardou's comedy DORA,

By MR. SAVILLE ROWE and MR. BOLTON ROWE.

ACT I.—"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,

'Tis woman's whole existence."—*Byron*.

ACT II.—"Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down."

—*Shakespeare*.

ACT III.—"But hither shall I never come again,

Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,

Farewell!"—*Tennyson*.

ACT IV.—"What do you call the play?

The Mouse Trap! Marry, how?"—*Shakespeare*.

Count Orloff	MR. BANCROFT.
Baron Stein	MR. ARTHUR CECIL.
Mr. Beauclerc	MR. JOHN CLAYTON.
Captain Beauclerc	MR. KENDAL.
Algie Fairfax	MR. SUGDEN.
Markham	MR. NEWTON.
Antoine	MR. DEANE.
Marquise de Rio-Zares	MISS LE THIÈRE.
Comtesse Zicka	MRS. BANCROFT.
Lady Henry Fairfax	MISS LAMARTINE.
Dora	MRS. KENDAL.
Mion	MISS IDA HERTZ.

“ 18, Berkeley Square.

“ DEAR SCOTTY,

“ I find, on reference to our agreement, that your share in *Diplomacy* fees will cease next January, but I propose that you shall receive your fees throughout the next run, which I hope will be agreeable to you.

“ I think you will add to them by kindly looking over the part of Lady Henry. Mrs. B. has some good notions to somewhat improve the part which you would at once grasp at an interview.

“ Can you come here and talk it over on either Saturday or Monday morning ?

“ If yes, send your own appointment.

“ Yours always,

“ S. B. B.”

The contract between Clement Scott, C. B. Stephenson and Bancroft, was written in 1877, in the firm and clear handwiring of the actor-manager himself. His writing has not changed a whit ; it is precisely the same to-day as it was then.

CHAPTER XXIV

CHARACTER SKETCHES :

MRS. KENDAL

IN the hammer, hammer, hammer of the highly variegated toil of everyday journalism, "stick tight to the wheel" and hope for the best. Don't ever shirk an opportunity. Have a go at it.

If you don't succeed, *make your failure big*. Let it be a brilliant one. Something that will start them all wondering. Remember, while there's a pen there's life—that is, if you haven't let the ink dry up.

It's your business to go on scribbling. Advice—keep your end up, and your stylo always "ready-for-wear."

What do you think of this for a nasty knock-out blow?

An editor ordered me to supply him with a series of interviews, but in the ordinary way of such things I did not think they were in my line.

However, it was not for *me* to *think*, that was his job. Mine was to do my best. Yet somehow I couldn't boil up sufficient interest to approach a theatrical celebrity with pencil and note-book in hand, and jot down vague answers to stereotyped questions.

Who cared a row of pins about anybody's views on probable plays of the future, or what their intentions were concerning new productions which ten to one never came off?

Did any breathing person ever want to hear present-day opinions of actors and actresses of the mildewed ages and mouldy past?

No, something less conventional would have to be designed if the "motion were carried." All the same, Mr. Splash decided that I should write to one or two of the "top-lights"—theatrical and otherwise—and beg the honour of a short half hour of their company in the retirement of their theatre dressing-rooms, or the seclusion of their private houses.

The first reply to my request came from General Sir Redvers Buller. The *second* was a jewel beyond price.

Study both of them, please, they are well worth it. That I had struck two men with real character straight off at "Push One" there can be no possible doubt whatever.

If the actor recognizes his letter to me, I hope he will forgive me for publishing it, but it is too rare a treasure to remain indefinitely hidden away.

" 90, Eaton Square, S.W.

" May 12th, 1906.

" DEAR MRS. SCOTT,

" Your letter of the 9th has only reached me here to-day.

" I never will be interviewed. I never write for newspapers, so I cannot see you for such a purpose, neither will I reply to Mr. Raleigh as you desire—and, really, do you think his communication worth it? To me it reads like a bad dream after an indigestible dinner.

" Best regards,

" Sincerely yours,

" REDVERS BULLER."

So much for number one—now let's get on with number two.

" Lyceum Theatre.

" —19 ?—

" MY DEAR CHILD,

" I never do these things. I wouldn't have an interview with Jesus Christ—I mean for publication, of

course. I might see Him privately, as I will you if you want me to. I do not believe in talk. Besides, I have nothing to say, and if I had I wouldn't say it, so you see, though broken-hearted to refuse—I must.

“Unshaken affection, even though you have asked me such a thing.

“Yours in every line,

“Etc. ? Etc. ? Etc.?”

My maiden “round” had brought down a cheery couple of meatless birds with a vengeance. Unabashed, and still uncrushed, I made an even bolder venture in another direction, and to my amazement am still alive to roam the earth.

Following strict directions, I called as requested, and now, if you care to, you can read for yourself precisely what happened.

Bearing in mind that this “Character Sketch” appeared in print at the time when Mrs. Kendal was playing *The Elder Miss Blossom* at the St. James’ Theatre, while George Alexander went on the road to fulfil provincial engagements, it is startlingly strange to find it so applicable to the present deplorable condition of the stage; for, with the exception of a line here, and a word there, every statement might be made and written with precisely the same truth at this moment.

MRS. KENDAL

“Of course, if you insist, why you must, only kindly understand I have the greatest possible aversion to little persons of your curious description.”

We had begun well, at any rate. It sounded so hopeful—so very promising.

With this quaint and genial welcome, Mrs. Kendal sank gracefully into the wide recess of a large armchair, and deliberately commenced knitting.

Apart from her professional work, Mrs. Kendal devotes much overflow of energy to knitting and crochet.

From the eternal six chain, one double, or knit three, purl two, movement, you may infer that there are moments when her whole life seems to "hang upon a single thread."

If it suddenly gives way, that is to say, if the cotton or silk, as the case may be, comes to an abrupt conclusion, and there is no more within reach of those strong, nervous white hands of hers, one of the well-trained waiting-maids is summoned, who promptly supplies the missing want, and once more the "ball is set rolling."

I fancy, somehow, that Mrs. Kendal's household is indirectly governed by crochet-hooks, silks and knitting-needles.

You see, if a maid comes into the room and finds her mistress working away desperately at a bobbin of blue, or blood-and-thunder mixture, she retires discreetly and bides her time—she thinks it better to postpone asking for an "evening out" until a little later in the day.

If, on the other hand, Mrs. Kendal is discovered gaily toying with a pale pink filament, delicate mauve, or neutral white, the flag of peace, not war, there is a general desire for the rest of the household to gather round this brilliant bundle of satire and catch some of the red-hot sparks of wit which fly from the ever-busy brain of this extraordinarily misunderstood and deep-thinking lady.

Talk about pace! why, the train of Mrs. Kendal's thought travels with such a wild rush and break-neck speed that it is enough to waken every "sleeper" on the swiftest railroad in existence.

With these rapid reflections, my eyes drifted to the silk twisted at that precise moment round Mrs. Kendal's deft fingers.

I heaved a sigh of relief.

It was of a tender shade of wheat-green; a tint both restful to the sight and reposeful to the mind.

I must be in luck's way, I felt sure of it, notwithstanding my *frappéd* greeting.

Seated in that old-fashioned "watchman's" chair, with her soft, gold-brown hair parted down the centre

and drawn back as usual in those becoming waves (it is just the same to-day, except that a widow's small white cap hides some of it), her complexion innocent of stage "make-up," or even pearl powder, and knitting away as if the whole future of the nation depended on it; this "Queen of the Profession" presented a most perfect picture of an "English Woman at Home."

The table was deliciously laid for tea. The glittering brightness of the massive silver service, the salver and the hot water kettle alone would convey the certainty, to a woman particularly, that in addition to her countless qualifications Mrs. Kendal possesses that of a model *châtelaine*.

In another moment we were drinking an infusion of "Ceylon's best" out of lovely old Chelsea tea-cups, and sampling a most appetizingly hot, well-buttered Sally Lunn.

Now, I have been told that for hot buttered cakes and buns and toast to be absolutely ideal, the butter ought to be used so lavishly that at the first mouthful it should run in warm, greasy dribblets down your chin.

Well, as afternoon tea serviettes were supplied, of which comfort I was immediately forced to avail myself, I presume Mrs. Kendal's cuisine arrangements are quite as superlative as those of the upper departments.

Heavy brocaded curtains were drawn across the windows, a fire burned brightly and the electric lights were gently toned with softly-mellowed shades. Rare old specimens of china and bric-à-brac reposed in costly cabinets, and adorned the mantelpiece. The walls were literally crowded with works of famous artists.

Favoured beyond all dreams, I had been permitted for an hour or so to enjoy the special privilege of talking to this talented personage within the sacred precincts of her own private boudoir.

"Go on, ask me some questions!" demanded my hostess imperiously.

I started in terror and nearly fell off my chair. The idea was so far away just then, and the mere suddenness

of the request had the effect of mixing my thoughts into an indefinite sort of a jelly ; I really didn't know what shape they'd " turn out " eventually.

Managing, however, to pull myself together, after a moment's hesitation, I began :

" Has the art of acting changed much during the last ten or twelve years ? "

" Changed ? Why, it's altogether different," came the quick reply. " It's as new to me as a frog's skin is to him when he slips the old one off, like a man does his—well—you know what I mean—only the frog pops his discarded skin into his mouth and swallows it, whilst a man throws his—well—what I said before—on to the floor."

" But what has brought about this wonderful change ? " I queried, getting more impertinent.

" I'll tell you." And here Mrs. Kendal became very earnest and emphatic.

" My dear, I was taught from my childhood that actors and actresses were required to act from eight till eleven, the other twenty-one they were free. *ACTING AFTER HOURS NOT NECESSARY*. Now the unfortunate part of it is that to-day they have absolutely reversed matters—*THEY ACT FOR TWENTY-ONE HOURS AND FORGET TO DO SO THE OTHER THREE*. Odd, isn't it ? "

When I ceased laughing at her unique way of putting things, and straightened myself out again, Mrs. Kendal went on to explain :

" I only said to Mrs. Tree this morning at rehearsal—you know she is going to play with our company at the St. James' in *The Likeness of the Night*—that to my mind *Acting is Nature with the rouge on it*. Do you understand what I mean ? "

" Indeed I do, and it is exactly what I should have expected from you, a sister of the man who described so poetically the fragile beauty of a young girl in these words : ' She looked like China with a Soul in it.' "

" Ah, not only poetry, but humanity breathed in all Tom's work. Why, half his success was due to nature,

which never fails. Dryden says so very truly: 'FOR ART MAY ERR, BUT NATURE CANNOT MISS.'

"*On the stage, therefore, everything must be natural, but highly coloured, accentuated, in fact. I don't believe in the under-acting policy of the present day. To SPEAK an author's lines is one thing, to ACT them is another, and to do BOTH is absolutely essential in the theatrical profession.*"

"Didn't you discuss the attributes necessary for an actress to possess before she can qualify for the stage, just a few days ago?"

"Oh, dear, what rubbish everyone wrote about that 'lecture,' as they called it."

"I don't think it was rubbish, it all seemed to be perfectly true."

"But why on earth should I be invariably taken *au pied de la lettre*? Don't they think I have any sense of humour? Here was I, invited to be present at a meeting of a society—and one, by the way, that Lady Dudley takes an immense interest in—for promoting the advancement of women. Well, I went. One lady rose and addressed us, describing in eloquent language the qualities required for a washer-woman. Another suggested the temperament requisite for a cook. Somebody else told us how to become a nurse—and then they requested me to give my views as to how to become an actress."

"Do you mean to say that you never prepared your speech?"

"Not a word of it. I said the first things that came into my mind, and each 'vital force' I declared to be positively indispensable they received with roars of merriment. As if I could mean such nonsense to be taken seriously!"

"I don't know whether you are serious now, or laughing, for I declare the 'off' side of your face is all dimples, and the 'near' side as sober as that of any judge alive."

"Now, look here, my dear. Everyone seems to forget the talented stock I spring from. Wasn't my mother a woman of tremendous literary ability, and one of the

cleverest comediennes of her time? Wasn't my father an author, an actor, and a painter into the bargain? And my brother Tom was one of the liveliest satirists ever known; so why we shouldn't both have inherited a little of their brain-power I cannot for the life of me imagine."

Mrs. Kendal tells a very funny story against herself of something which happened to her in America.

Possessed with a positive passion for poetry, this artistic genius not only greedily devours the works of all the great poets, but occasionally bursts into verse herself.

In New York, inspired by the exquisite art of Joseph Jefferson, the pathetically human actor of Rip Van Winkle fame, Mrs. Kendal addressed a poem to him, which J. J. read to his friend and brother artist, Edwin Booth.

Now, Booth immediately sent off a letter to Mrs. Kendal and demanded to know why Jefferson should be the only favoured one.

"What's the matter with me that I should hang cold without a poem from you?"

The actress read the note, thought a little and then sent a reply in verse, which Booth made public by having it printed.

Very shortly afterwards Edwin Booth died, and in an American journal called *Life* there appeared these lines announcing his death:

"Edwin Booth is dead. He might have lived longer. Mrs. Kendal's poem killed him."

In America Mrs. Kendal is not only regarded as the "Queen of the Profession," but as a "Queen of Society," too, and in New York this is an honour indeed, for the "Upper Ten" out there is not nearly so keen to open its doors to Stageland as it is over here.

The dinner-gong boomed ominously.

I accepted the signal, and "rose to the occasion."

"Going at last? Thank goodness! Oh, I'm so glad you can't stay. No, are you really off? Must you go?"

I felt myself gently but firmly hustled down the wide and richly-carpeted staircase into the hall.

"Good-bye, delighted you can't stop. So pleased to have seen you. Don't ever call again, but remember we always lunch at one, tea at four and dine at six. So sweet of you to come. Yes, shall expect you soon. Good-bye—what a relief!"

And with this eccentric parting, the street door of Mrs. Kendal's palatial home in Portland Place—No. 12—closed, and left me outside to meditate, to wonder and to marvel.

* * * * *

Naturally, I did not publish the "Character Sketch" of this remarkable *prima donna* without submitting it for Mrs. Kendal's approval. I sent along a proof, and her laconic comment when she returned it to me was simply sublime. This is all the actress had to say :

"FUNNY, BUT I COULD HAVE WRITTEN SOMETHING FUNNIER."

This letter from Mr. Kendal proves that even over forty years ago, adverse criticism could not disturb or affect the career of genuine artists—and Mrs. Kendal *is* a *very great* artist :

"9, Taviton Street,

"Gordon Square, W.C.

"Thursday, April 4th, '77.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,

"Long rehearsals Monday and Tuesday and morning performance of *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Gaiety yesterday must be my excuse for not having written before to thank you most heartily for your very kind and flattering letter.

"I can assure you I am more than gratified if I have in any way succeeded in representing the character of George Clark in your charming little play of *The Vicarage* to your satisfaction.

“As regards adverse criticism—both my wife and self have had so much of it for years past, that custom has made it a property of business. And when one sees who and what is praised nowadays, I cannot but feel our state is the more gracious! While the *public*—the only critics we have to fear—continue to receive us with such favour, we can afford to laugh at any (can't read the word) abuse—though why we should have been so persistently singled out for that purpose is a problem yet to be solved—so, my dear Scott, with you—while the *public* continue to speak of, and receive, your little play in the enthusiastic way they do—you can laugh at the few ignorant notices, and treat them with the contempt they deserve.

“*The Vicarage* goes better every night—a *double* call last night.

“With *renewed thanks*,

“Believe me, sincerely yours,

“W. H. KENDAL.”

CHAPTER XXV

SARAH BERNHARDT

“**A** DIEU, mon amie ! A demain, n'est-ce pas ? ” Wafting a graceful salutation to me over the tips of her admirably manicured finger-nails, “ La Grande Sarah ” turned towards the looking-glass in her dressing-room, situated behind the scenes of Le Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris, and commenced rapidly disconnecting herself with the clothes of the unhappy “ Eaglet,” as he appeared according to Rostand’s idea of Napoleon’s half-witted son in this author’s blank-verse drama.

My satisfaction was complete. To-night I had watched the greatest French artist of her time amidst the glamour and enthrallment of her theatrical environment. Tomorrow I was to see her in the seclusion of her own beautiful home, overlooking the ever-green and picturesque Parc Monceau. To-night I had stood side by side with Sarah, and marvelled at her extraordinary energy, the energy of a woman nearing seventy years, that day in, day out, survives the laborious work of entering into every detail of the character she is playing with a thoroughness I had never dreamed either man or woman possessed.

To-night, before the curtain rose on the first act of the tragic story surrounding *L’Aiglon*, I had seen Sarah switch up the footlights of the miniature stage with its background of mirrors, which occupies a portion of her own private room, and, drawing aside the curtains, step on to it, and there go through every line and action of the part previous to making her appearance in the theatre proper before the public.

Sarah Bernhardt explained to me that this was her invariable rule, and one of the reasons why her memory

never failed her. She rehearsed each scene in that way a few moments before the call boy came to announce her approaching cue, and she told me it would be impossible for her to change her methods now. I wonder how many, if any, other actors or actresses have climbed up the steep hill to fame in this strenuous fashion.

I suppose more has been written and gossiped about the "divine and incomparable Sarah" than of any other living celebrity. Fiction and fact have been interchangeable terms where she was concerned.

I have, however, been allowed on various occasions to contrast the real Sarah with the artificial one, to see the true woman as apart from the brilliant artist. I have been welcomed by her in the most gracious and hospitable manner, not only in her home in Paris, but in her rooms at theatres over here, and in hotels in England and America.

If we are to believe the scandal-loving chroniclers, Sarah used to be a woman of extraordinary eccentricity, who by day mounted to the skies in balloons, took daring rides on fire-engines when they were going full tilt, painted pictures or modelled in clay, tamed wild animals like a female Van Amburgh, and o' nights slept in a white satin-lined coffin with a black coverlet embroidered with skulls and cross-bones thrown over her.

Sarah never did anything of the kind. Her highest ambition now is to go up in an aeroplane, and her bed, whenever I saw it, albeit I have known her quilts to be occasionally of a highfalutin design, looked extremely comfortable and perfectly normal. It bore no resemblance to solemnity or funereal rites, but it certainly gave you the desire to *bury* yourself amidst the luxurious down pillows and lace-trimmed linen.

Taking into consideration the genius of the woman, her affectations were peculiarly modest. Once, and once only, do I remember Sarah, for some unaccountable reason, putting on anything approaching "side."

It happened at the Lyric Club, then quite a pleasant rendezvous. Horace Sedger, "*My Handsome Horace*," as one of his many loves used to whisper in his ear whenever

he allowed her to kiss him, had arranged for some deliciously posed *tableaux vivants* to be shown there in the large hall.

Each picture illustrated a different poem written by the French bard Alfred de Musset; and the verses were to be recited by Madame Bernhardt on the dais, in full view of the people.

But the chicks had been counted a little too previously, for when "Milady" arrived, it didn't take long to discover that something had happened to put her out. What, nobody knew. So Sedger announced, much to the chagrin of the eager crowd, that Sarah's voice would be heard, but that she herself would remain "off," in concealment.

Then they discovered that the stage was not large enough to hold Sarah's reading-box without seriously affecting the pictures. Screens were hastily fetched, placed well down in the O.P. corner, where the orchestra *was not*, and Madame, book in hand, had to be mysteriously brought in and wedged behind them.

The pictures were faultless, but oh! Madame's voice began and remained *one long, dull, monotonous drone*. She spoke out of tune, and appeared to be utterly bored with the entire affair.

To crown the situation and complete our sense of Sarah's utter weariness, as she yawned through the final stanza, we saw the book fly high above the screens, and heard the undeniable exclamation of—"ZUT!"

Of course, the general roar of laughter must have startled her considerably, as I don't for an instant believe that Sarah imagined she was either going to be heard, or that her "book of the words" would be visible to the people in front. I regret to say, though, that both were most distinct, and their meaning unmistakably clear.

One of the most earnest conversations I had with Sarah, many years ago, touched oddly enough on the heavy tax imposed in France, not so much on the theatrical artists as on theatrical enterprise.

Prominent among the abuses she cited was "Le Droit des Pauvres," a tax which absorbed an enormous

amount of intakings, and which is collected before the adjustment is made.

Sarah made one extraordinarily pertinent remark, and demanded impetuously to be told *why the big shops were not taxed?*

"Why should I pay for the poor, while the Louvre, the Trois Quartiers, the Galeries Lafayette, the Bon Marché, the Printemps, etc., go, what you English call, 'Scots free'?"

From the "Droit des Pauvres" she launched forth about the advertisement tax. Every ticket issued in France, every theatrical advertisement printed, is taxed by stamp; it is a pleasure tax which yields a huge revenue from advertisers. "Why don't you do the same in England?" she asked.

Here I felt on equal ground, for that tax which we were talking of, over twenty years ago now, and which, so far as the theatre tickets are concerned, has only been in force in England a year or so, happened to be one of the many so-called "Clement-Scott crazes." He always maintained that every theatrical voucher paid for OR FREE, and every theatrical poster on the walls, in stations and anywhere else, should be taxed, arguing that it would not be an obnoxious tax, but a fair one, as those who could afford pleasure could also afford to be reasonably taxed for it.

Probably the record of my earliest visit alone to Sarah is the most deeply engraved on the tablets of my memory. I gave a description of it then, and believing that first impressions are always the best, I cannot do better than repeat it on these pages.

I had boldly entered through the covered gateway and mustered up courage to ring the bell.

My heart beat a quick pit-a-pat.

Outside, on the grey pavement and still greyer asphalted road, the heavy rain-drops seemed to echo my excited heart-throb, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.

I waited. No earthly sound came from within.

I touched the bell again, and once more strained my ears for a response.

This time I did not go unrewarded, for a muffled foot-step became distinctly audible from afar. Gradually the tramp grew more positive ; and then a bolt shot back, the door was thrown open, and from out the gloom a shape assumed the figure of a man.

I spoke :

“ Is Madame at home ? ”

“ Your name, if you please ? ”

He received it on pasteboard.

“ This way, if you please, Madame.”

The man conducted me into a dimly-lighted ante-room, and from thence down a short, wide staircase, hedged on either side with tall ferns and occasional hot-house plants.

At the foot of the stairs two massive bronze figures right and left clasped long branches of holy palm in their folded hands, and as I stepped into the huge reception-chamber a wave of peaceful calm swept over me. It was so mysterious, so insinuating, yet not confidential ; so characteristic of the woman I burned with curiosity to see.

The giant candles alight over those tall figures, the strong, passionate perfume of warm flowers, that regally imposing couch “ half centre,” with its throne-like canopy of Eastern brocade, the masses of tantalizingly inviting cushions, the walls not papered, or painted, or panelled, but artistically draped with a silky substance, patterned with the golden fleur-de-lis. What did it all remind me of ? Nothing really definite. Just Sarah, all moods, manners and charm.

Treasures in china, old lace, antique jewels, Indian curios and quaint oddments adorned the nooks and corners. Cosy lounges and chairs, divans and sofas, were thrust here and there in reckless confusion.

“ Madame is not yet back from her drive in the Bois.”

That much and no more had the well-trained manservant informed me.

I glanced at the clock.

Tush ! Tush ! Madame was but half an hour overdue. In a few hours’ time, perhaps, I might begin to feel vaguely apprehensive ; but now, at this early stage—

well, it would be nothing more nor less than fatuous imbecility.

I have some obscure recollection of Sarah accepting an invitation to luncheon on a certain Sunday, and arriving, wearing that bewitching "property smile" of hers, in time for after-dinner coffee in the evening, and being quite pleased with her *petite personne* for such amazing punctuality.

The deep stillness of the house was disturbed by the clanging of a bell.

I started to my feet.

A heavy door creaked open, then closed with an ominous thud.

Again that deathly pin-drop silence was resumed.

I sank back lazily into my chair, only to jump out of it once more with a violently suppressed, "At last!"

There could be no mistake this time. Madame had, indeed, come home.

Every door in the entire household seemed to move in well-trained chorus. In a moment the very air breathed bustle and excitement, and, as if by magic, slack sluggishness gave way to agitating activity.

Amidst this conclusive palpitation outside a soft foot-fall "purred" evenly over the thickly-carpeted floor, accompanied by the flowing swish-swish of womanly draperies.

There is nothing ever aggressive or even determined about the melody of Sarah's always harmonious "clings"; you only realize the richness of their tone and their sense of beauty by the way they hang and fold about her.

The even "pacings" made straight for the short, wide stairway down which I had passed.

I rose and bowed low.

I stood in the presence of a great genius, for Sarah Bernhardt appeared before me.

She welcomed me with *bras ouverts*, and in an instant made me feel the intoxicating allurements of her vivid personality.

Away from the theatre and its feverish seductiveness this "people's idol," so applauded and worshipped on

the stage, is as sweetly natural and charming as any dear woman can be.

Madame Bernhardt motioned me to come into an easy chair, and proceeded to fill another one most gracefully herself. Then she slipped her arms free from the voluminous folds of her cloak, took off her picture-hat, and ran her fingers through her thick, shortly-cropped hair—"bobbed" they call it to-day. Why?

I shall never forget Sarah at the theatre one evening after her performance of the love and lung-sick Marguerite Gautier in Dumas' *Lady of the Camelias*. Her head looked particularly attractive, and, being in her room, I remarked on the entire success of her coiffure.

"Mais ce n'est pas moi, ma chère; c'est Clarkson," she said laughingly, as she plucked off one of "Willie's" choice creations. Instantly her own hair burst forth from its bondage, and stood out in assertively frizzed and fluted disorder.

Sarah Bernhardt's "crown of glory" is naturally so crimped and fuzzy, that she has never been able to find a coiffeur who can "impress" it with the universal "heat wave" which fashion has decreed to be la mode.

In temperament Sarah is outwardly serene and tranquil; she never allows herself to be ruffled or easily disturbed. A striking contrast to our own Ellen Terry, who is all "overstrung" with emotion.

On one occasion I chanced to call on Madame Bernhardt in her stage-room after she had been playing the big scene from *La Tosca*. There I found this *artiste sans rivale* reclining at ease, as cool as a cucumber, not a drop trembling on the end of a single eyelash.

Suddenly, with a tear-stained face and a general appearance of complete agitation, Ellen Terry floated in. She was evidently too overcome to string together any comprehensive sentence in French, so she didn't try; but gazing imploringly about her, and with one of those well-known Terryesque movements and a voice choked with sobs, she wailed in broken accents:

"Somebody tell her how I cried!"

Sarah, on her side, speaks very indifferent English. Here is a specimen of it in a telegram sent to a well-known journalist and particularly dear friend of mine :

“ I am emotioned. Read your beautiful article. I am grateful to you, and feel glorious to know a man as talented as you, so indulgent for an artist. All my heart with you.—SARAH BERNHARDT.”

“ Tell me one of the most eventful episodes of your life ? ” I begged.

“ The honour I appreciated most,” she answered unhesitatingly, “ was the command to appear before your late Queen Victoria at the Hotel Regina, Nice, and afterwards to inscribe my name in the ‘ great book reserved only for the most eminent personages.’ ”

And in this magnificent volume, wherein these interesting signatures are perforce so plainly and simply recorded, to Sarah Bernhardt’s alone is permitted an “ extra turn.” Her name reads thus :

SARAH BERNHARDT.
LE PLUS BEAU JOUR DE MA VIE

Sweet, too, was her reply to Queen Mary’s mother, the late Duchess of Teck, who sent for Sarah to come to her reception-room at the back of the Royal box one night at the play ; and after paying her the usual stereotyped compliments, the Duchess inquired sympathetically whether Sarah did not feel half dead from fatigue after giving two such amazingly realistic performances as she had done that day.

“ Madame,” responded Sarah, in her most dulcet tones, “ *je mourrai en scène ; c’est mon champs de bataille.* ”

Everyone around Sarah idolizes her ; she is always doing charitable and kindly actions. To have, with her, is to give ; to refuse, an impossibility.

As she replied to someone expostulating with her as to her super-lavishness :

“ Why, it isn’t worth while having friends if you cannot do trivial little services such as these.”

In America Madame Bernhardt travels with two secretaries, her usual quartette of lady's-maids, her chef, her chauffeur, and, as a further addition to her suite, a face masseur, to whom the actress pays a fabulous sum as an inducement to leave his business in Paris and direct his attention to her during the United States tour.

"Come and have supper with me to-night, and we will discuss the new play and my plans for the future—eh?" she suggested.

So, while my brain whirled with delight, and my whole being puffed with pride, Sarah linked her arm in mine, took me to the front door, opened it silently, and urged me quite quietly to the other side of it.

You know those weird ways of hers? You recall her acting as La Tosca after the murder of the villainous Scarpia, and her frenzied utterances as she cried out: "Mœurs—mœurs—mœurs"; perhaps remember how noiselessly she placed lighted candles at the head and feet of the dead man and a crucifix on his breast; wiped the bloodstains from her hands and dress, and then, without a word or sound, turned the handle of the door, opened it very slightly, and vanished like a shadowy ghost into the darkness beyond? *That is exactly how she let me out.*

Once more I felt myself alone in Paris. The blackness of night everywhere, no light, no noise, nothing but the perpetual beat of the rain-drops. These, of all things, kept me persistent company.

The last time I saw Sarah in her own theatre at the back of the stage she was appearing in a strange play called *Les Buffons*. It never came to this country, and I don't think it had much of a run in Paris.

When I went into her room, she was engaged in an animated discussion with Heinemann, the publisher, as to her book of memoirs. He wanted them to commence with the magnificent furore she created as Fédora; but Sarah argued that she had "arrived" long before then and was an *étoile* in this country from the moment she made her first appearance here.

She might have been merely a *Sociétaire of the Comédie*

Française in Paris, but in England— Oh, dear, no! She was a "star" immediately she captured London, when L. M. Mayer first introduced the Comedie Française Company into this country at the old Gaiety Theatre in the late seventies or early eighties.

You would never believe, to see Sarah now, that she was once so thin, so *very, very* thin and fragile, that an eminent critic, when he saw a picture of her taken with her favourite dog, exclaimed: "Oh! a dog and a *bone*!"

Cosmo Gordon Lennox told me a most amusing story about Sarah, which happened at a supper-party given by Robert Hichens, the novelist and dramatic author, to Bernhardt and Irving.

It must have been just about the time when people were beginning to say: "Poor old Irving! I'm afraid he's seen his best days," and, naturally, his thoughts were never very wide of how to make ends meet.

As usual, the Divine One arrived very late and looking wonderful in a gown shimmering with sequins and jewels. Like all French artists, Sarah did exactly the right thing at the right moment: she went straight up to Henry and placing her hands on his shoulders, she drew him towards her and kissed him on both cheeks. A murmur of gratified applause greeted this happy thought as she settled herself down by his side, and the conversation became fairly general, but not remarkable.

After supper some of the guests suddenly perceived that the two "*Lions*" of the evening had evidently touched on a subject that interested them both passionately. The ordinary kind of Ollendorf French was wholly inadequate to express to others what they really felt, and Hichens immediately pounced upon Cosmo, who speaks Sarah's language as well as he does his own, and implored him to go up and act as interpreter. This Cosmo did, and taking a chair, sat as close as he possibly could to the couple of talkative ones.

At this instant a hush fell on the assembly, and everybody waited with bated breath to hear the exquisitely dramatic or poetical thoughts which were pouring from

their busy brains. Judge of Cosmo's dismay when he discovered that he had butted *in upon a violent financial argument about the fees demanded by French and English authors. Both artists were in complete accord. The crisis had been reached, and Sarah, her golden voice ringing wildly with the depth of her feelings, clinched the conversation with this astounding utterance :*

"MON CHER IRVING, in such a case I turn to the good gentleman and say, *Je m'en fou de vous.*"

After a short pause Cosmo Lennox did his level best to explain what Sarah had said, and wound up with :

"I tell the gentleman to go to blazes."

But Sarah, with the sensitive ear of a brilliant actress, even for a language she does not understand, replied vehemently:

"*Pas du tout, pas du tout, ce n'est pas assez fort.*"

Cosmo got hot all over and made another dash for it :

"I tell him to go to hell."

There was a thrill of pleasure, or horror, as once again the VOIX D'OR continued :

"*Pas assez fort, pas assez fort.*"

At last, with the courage of desperation, Cosmo Lennox made a final effort :

"*I tell him to go——*"

Crash ! Somebody mercifully, by accident or intent, smashed a decanter, and under cover of the confusion he managed to hit on a word which apparently satisfied the actress's sense of proportion.

As a matter of fact, Sarah's charm was such that *she* could use any expression without the slightest trace of vulgarity ; but when this same expression came to be translated into somewhat halting English by a highly nervous and overheated interpreter, it sounded truly—well, it became impossible, it simply couldn't be done.

In my autograph album Sarah has written these words :

"IL FAUT ' SOUVENT SOUVENT ' REPETER A MONSIEUR CLEMENT SCOTT QUE JE SUIS SA TOUJOURS RECONNAISSANTE—COMME FRANÇAISE, ET COMME ARTISTE.

" SARAH BERNHARDT."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS

WITH all his affectations, his fantastic poses, his intolerant mannerisms, his impudent swagger, his effeminate vanity and his unpardonable self-conceit, who, having known this brilliant man of letters, can resist giving a sigh over the tragedy of Oscar Wilde?

In the days when Wilde spent most of the year at Oxford as an "undergrad," he used frequently to write to Clement Scott in the most modest terms of humble adulation.

He had almost a reverence for the art of acting even then, and several of his college-day essays on plays and players were printed by Clement Scott in the *Theatre Magazine*, which the *Telegraph* critic then edited. They appeared under the pseudonym, if it can be called one, of "A Young Oxonian."

Reading through some of his beautifully written prose, his daintily and exquisitely-worded verse, and remembering the refinement of his comedies, it is difficult to reconcile these with that other side, in a nature so charged with adoration of all that is lovely and poetical in life.

Who could possibly have believed that his endless fountain of wit would change to such a deplorable stream of folly—folly which hurt no one but himself—for none of Oscar Wilde's works served to increase a morbid thirst for the undesirable; on the contrary, they often helped to keep you in a high and happy element of thought?

What this man of mighty mind could have become had he not allowed his senses to dominate him with such bitter recklessness it is impossible to say.

We knew Oscar Wilde in all the glory of his overwhelming triumph. We met him again after he had served his two years' sentence, first in Wandsworth, and then in Reading Gaols. Possibly he finished his term of imprisonment at Wandsworth, I am not sure. I only know that he remained some time in Reading Gaol. Oscar Wilde's own grim poem has made that absolute.

One long line of unbroken victory crowned his every effort at Oxford. He invariably succeeded where others failed. Each play he wrote had the genuine hall-mark of genius stamped upon it. Wilde ascended the gilded spire of fame without a single hitch, and fell from the topmost point to the lowest depth with a deadly, sickening crash.

The first or second of the extraordinarily human and heartrending scenes of gaol existence which Oscar Wilde described in the columns of the *Daily Chronicle* after his release from prison bore this pitifully pathetic heading :

**"DON'T READ THIS IF YOU WANT TO
BE HAPPY TO-DAY."**

It had as signature :

By the Author of "THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL."

And when "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" appeared in book form, the original edition bore merely Oscar Wilde's prison number, "C.3.3."

On the other hand, I can still picture Oscar Wilde puffing away at a gold-tipped cigarette as he swaggered on to the stage of the St. James' after the enthusiastic reception of his comedy, *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

His insolent effrontery on that occasion irritated the entire audience, yet nobody could deny the author's ability.

In the buttonhole of his evening coat Wilde wore the hideous emblem—at least, it had become known as

such—of his lamentable “mental deformity,” and the front, second and third rows of the stall occupants mostly had replicas of the same sorry pattern.

I allude to the wearing of the “Green Carnation,” by which every youth who decorated himself with one gave silent acknowledgment of his intimate acquaintanceship with Oscar Wilde.

These pretty, painted, immaculately dressed young men were always to be found at Oscar Wilde’s *premieres*, never at other first-night shows, and their presence caused Clement Scott to write a withering article headed, “The Cult of the Green Carnation.” It was over this that Oscar Wilde and C. S. came to loggerheads.

“Why discuss the abominations of the world?” he argued. “You, with your experience of it, must know there are two distinct sides to it. There is a horrible *reality which has to be*, and which you ought to be *ashamed to speak about*. But there is the other, the Art side, which you should never cease to praise. Be content that you have been given a mission to perform in life, and see that you do it fairly.”

That is how Oscar Wilde, the triumphant playwright, the brilliant writer of verse, and the rich man of letters, spoke. How pitiful!

What a drop from Heaven to Hell! How he must have suffered! It has been said in this country that at the moment of his great calamity literary men and artists attempted to help him by laudatory expressions of his work, and that theatres all over London put up his plays as a token of their admiration for his writing and proof of their worth.

This is wholly inaccurate.

I think I am right in saying that at the time of Oscar Wilde’s arrest two of his plays were being acted here—one at the Haymarket, called *The Ideal Husband*, and the other at the St. James’, named *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Great successes, both of them.

My recollection of “helping” is that at both of these theatres the name of Oscar Wilde was immediately inked

out from every programme, handbill and advertisement. His plays continued, but his name disappeared in connection with them altogether.

That is the "help" which Oscar Wilde received.

Before the trial, and when Oscar Wilde had been released on bail, the opportunity for escape came to him, and he left London for Paris, meaning to get clear of the country entirely and never be seen in it again.

In the madness of his vanity he reflected on the situation. Several so-called friends helped to fan the fire, with the result that he determined to return to face his accusers and defy them.

Oscar Wilde believed firmly that he would be allowed to go free. He never dreamed that he could possibly be convicted. He did not think the world could go on and prosper without him; he thought himself necessary to its existence. What refinement of torture he must have endured!

The Green Carnation, that fatal Green Carnation, nothing more frightful than that had been seen near Oscar Wilde. How his degrading surroundings in Reading Gaol must have crucified his very soul!

In the warm dawn of a summer morning we arrived at Dieppe Quay on our way to Rouen, and were accosted in the half-light by an extremely shabby, dirty and unkempt-looking individual, who shuffled up to Clement Scott and asked in a husky voice if he had quite forgotten him.

He held out a coarse and not over-clean hand, with finger-nails cruelly disfigured.

We were about to pass on, never dreaming it could really be anyone we knew, when suddenly the man drew himself up erect, and gave a defiant, half-sneering laugh.

We both stopped to look again.

It is impossible to tell you how we felt. I turned away, the tears were streaming down my face. I couldn't help them, but I didn't want him to see them.

He told us that he had been down to meet the boats for several days, he wanted to see someone he knew, someone

from the old country who would help him to get to Paris. Just think of it—it had come to that.

Why, there were hundreds and hundreds who would gladly have given him all he could wish for. But he wouldn't write, he just waited like that, on the quay, for a chance friend.

Oscar Wilde travelled with us to Rouen asking questions all the while, he seemed literally parched for news. He had no luggage with him, so what he intended doing when he arrived in Paris we did not know, and neither of us liked to ask him.

At Rouen, Oscar Wilde did not seem inclined to leave us, so we invited him to get out, have something to eat, and continue this journey by a later train. He accepted the invitation eagerly, and devoured his food as though some time had elapsed since he had tasted his last meal.

Outside the station buffet we parted, and never heard from or saw him again.

Later on came the news of Oscar Wilde's illness, but nobody seemed to know exactly where he had hidden himself. We tried to find out, but failed.

Then we read the announcement of his death, and learned that alone, friendless, and penniless Oscar Wilde had died at the Hôtel d'Alsace, in the poverty-stricken district of the Rue des Beaux Arts, somewhere up near the Montmartre end of Paris.

His last words before he passed into unconsciousness were remarkably characteristic of the man :

"Doctor," he whispered, fixing his fast glazing eyes on to the attendant by his bedside, who, alas, had arrived too late to be of much assistance, "*I'm afraid I'm dying beyond my means.*"

" Keats House,
" Tite Street,
" Chelsea.

" DEAR MR. CLEMENT SCOTT,

" Your letter has given me very great pleasure. Whatever beauty is in the poem, is due to the graceful

fancy and passionate artistic nature of Madame Modjeska. I am really only the reed, through which her sweet notes have been blown. Yet slight as my own work may have been, and of necessity hasty, I thank you very much for your praise, praise really welcome, and giving me much encouragement as coming from a real critic.

"Your own poems I know very well. You dare *to do* what I hardly *dare*—to sing of the passion, and joy, and sorrow, of the lives of the men and women among whom we live, and the world which is the world of all of us.

"When I read your poem some weeks ago on the Clerks, I remember thinking of the praise that Wordsworth gave to Burns for having shown how 'Verse may build itself a Princely House on Humble Truth.'

"For my own part, I fear I too often 'Trundle back my soul five hundred years,' as Aurora Leigh says, and find myself more at home in the woods of (sorry I can't read it) or the glades of Arcady than I do in this little fiery coloured world of ours.

"*I envy you your strength. I have not got it.*

"With many thanks again,

"Very truly yours,

"OSCAR WILDE."

"Keats House,

"Tite Street,

"Chelsea.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,

"I think your ode very fine and spirited indeed, with vastly more colour than Lord T.'s. The Indian welcome, and the Canadian 'Pine branch nestling with the English Rose' are specially good, but I think you might correct the one very Irish oversight, or slip (was it to give local Hibernian colour to the stanza?).

"Erin can do most things, but she can't, bless her!

'remember the days to come.'

Let her 'look out to' or 'rejoice in' or 'greet kindly' the days etc., or 'bethink her of days,' but I fear that you

must sacrifice the word 'remember' in respect of the future.

"I think the work so good that I fancy you will accept this kindly meant suggestion of correction.

"We *do* say 'remember next Tuesday, 8 o'clock sharp,' but we *mean* remember a bargain we have *just* made to dine on that date, and please do not forget it.

"Sincerely yours,

"OSCAR WILDE."

What a change in the tone of these two letters *before* and *after* success.

As an example of fine English literature Oscar Wilde's last work "De Profundis" is most beautiful, it impressed me more than his "Ballad of Reading Gaol."

Does his memory live so unforgotten by the works he has written, by the crime for which he stood convicted, or by the price he paid for it? Who shall say? Who *can* say?

CHAPTER XXVII

GEORGE R. SIMS

I TOOK up the receiver and listened !
“ Hullo—Exchange ! ”

No answer.

“ Hullo, hullo, hullo. Exchange, are you there ? ”

“ I say, how about that claret, it's wanted for luncheon, you know.”

“ I really beg your pardon.”

“ I say. Are you there ? Are you the Highball Wine Co. ? ”

“ Hullo ! Is that 545 Hop ? ”

“ Are you r-r-r-r theatre ? ”

“ Exchange—Exchange—Exchange.”

“ I want to know about that claret——”

“ Would you mind putting up your receiver ? ”

“ What number are you ? ”

“ What on earth does it matter ?—I'm not your claret.”

“ Exchange—Exchange—Exchange——”

“ Number, please, there's no necessity to shout so loudly.”

“ Put me through to ' Dagonet ' please.”

“ What number.”

“ Number ? I don't want a number, I want ' Dagonet.' ”

“ Who's Dagonet ? ”

“ Who's Dagonet ?—here, her r-r-r-r-r.”

“ Speak up, please.”

r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r.

“ I say, Exchange, somebody's on my line.”

r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r.

"Hullo, Exchange, hullo, hullo, hullo, kindly clear my line——"

"I say, are you there, dear?"

"I think you have made a mistake."

"No I've not, that's me, right enough. I say, can you be at Victoria at eight sharp? I've arranged it all A1."

"Excuse me, would you mind hanging up your receiver? I'm much too busy to meet you at——"

"Who the——"

"Consider it said."

"Exchange, I say, Exchange—hullo, hullo, hullo——"

"What's your number?"

"243——"

"Someone wants you. Here you are."

"Exchange—hullo, hullo, Exchange——"

"I'm not the Exchange."

"Who are you?"

"Author, journalist, playwright, poet, artist's model, dog-fancier, and press agent to 'Minty Mutton.'"

"Good gracious! Plato and Parnassus can't stand on the same hearthrug with you, but thank goodness I've found you at last."

"Yes, you're in luck's way, for I'm going very cheap this morning. Eggs sixteen a shilling, *can't be beaten*, one-foot-in-the-grave sort of condition, don't you know?"

"That's George R. Sims at his best. May I come up for a chat presently?"

"No, no, do wait till I get well. Just listen to my voice. We've all got chills up here. The cat started the business, bless her."

"Well, may I come the day after to-morrow at 5, or 5.30?"

"Too late, too late, I eat my fried sole, and drink my decanted ginger-beer at that hour."

"You've improved, a month ago you mealed off a digestive biscuit and two drops of lemon juice. Well, at 2.30, will that be better?"

"All right. I'll go and sit in mustard and hot water for the rest of the day, and try to boil myself into a re-



Photo by]

L. Cassell & Sons,

The Long & Co. Skirt
Geo. R. Sims

GEO. R. SIMS.

[Facing p. 246.

spectable 'Living Londoner.' Ahtcu — ahtcu — ahtcu — good-bye, ahtcu — for the, ahtcu — ahtcu — present — ahtcu——”

“Good-bye r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r.”

* * * * *

The clock chimed the hour.

I drove up to the great man's house and rang the bell. The door was opened by none other than Mrs. Bullyboy, who ushered me into the presence of our own and only “Dagonet” without uttering a word.

With simple, unaffected frankness Mr. Sims bade me welcome in his delightfully cosy and artistic study. He steered me round ancient carved oak tables, past heavily-laden book-cases, under spreading palm trees to a comfortable “shaker” chair into which I tucked myself and rocked lazily backwards and forwards before the responsive fire.

What a deucious sense of contentment after the yellow depression of the soot perspiring fog outside !

“So glad you didn't come a second earlier, I've only just stopped sneezing. Let me see, how many times did I register ? Oh, fifty-three. Have you see one of the sneezometers before ?” asked Mr. Sims, as he handed me a peculiar-looking little instrument. “It's one of the newest inventions, and was sent to me yesterday from Birmingham by a ‘man who nose.’”

Here, owing to the bad attack of catarrh that was still clinging with persistency to this ever popular poet-author, “Dagonet's” voice went on tour.

Presently it returned in indefinite pipelets, and then gradually and at shorter intervals it became less eccentric and more conventional.

“My dear lady, these invention fiends nearly drive me crazy. Why, a wretch almost killed me in this very room one day.”

“Salads of ‘Mustard and Cress,’ don't whisper anything so terrible,” I exclaimed.

“But it's a fact. I let myself in with my latchkey,

walked straight here, and found a creature deeply engaged in a shooting experiment. He had invented a bullet-proof waistcoat, which he promptly tried to put round me. I evaded it by a miracle, but he propped the infernal machine up against the figure of Queen Victoria on my escritoire, and blazed away at it like one possessed. I crawled under the table. Eventually, after giving him a few diamond studs and heirlooms, and promising him three columns of notice in the *Referee* and a pension for life, I coaxed him out of the house and telephoned for a doctor."

"What a ghastly experience!"

"Talking of that cast of Queen Victoria reminds me of the extraordinary coincidence that happened the night before she died. THE CROWN ROLLED ON TO THE FLOOR, AND WAS SMASHED TO A THOUSAND ATOMS. I only had a new one made a little time ago."

There is nothing lachrymose or phlegmatic about George R. Sims. He lives every hour of the day in a fever heat of exciting work and thrilling adventure.

His energy is simply astounding, and to see the mass of material he turns out in the course of a day is enough to create a panic in the mind of the hardest hustler yet born.

"You know they all will write to me for advice," he remarked. "I'm nothing more nor less than a perambulating 'Enquire Within for Everything.' Listen to this letter:

" 'DEAR DAGONET,

" 'Will you please recommend my honey to your many thousands of friends? There is no sale for it here at Turtle-on-the-Tottle.'

" 'Will Dagonet kindly inform Percy how he can make Peace with Geraldine?'

" 'Queenie would like to know the best food for rearing mice.'

"And they all have to be answered, too," groaned G. R. S. "And this is where I sometimes get desperate, jam my hat down over my eyes, and start off for a long

walk. I love outdoor exercise. I often tramp as far as Barking and back, or anywhere down in the slums and by-streets of this great, grimy city of ours, where I can mix with the crowd of 'Sweated London,' and study the lives of these half-starved creatures. Oh, those poor pinched faces of the hungry, wailing little ones! They would make your heart ache to see them. These children do not *live*, my dear friend, they only '*linger*.' "

"I know, I know, it is all too sad! But tell me some more about your own life."

"A strange thing happened one day when I was 'slumming.' I nearly got knocked down by a runaway horse attached to a cab, which eventually collided with another cab, and resulted in a terrific smash. Standing shoulder to shoulder with me, I suddenly became aware of another man. He, too, had been a witness of the accident. A police officer came up, who knew me quite well by sight, and asked me if I would give evidence when called upon to do so. Of course I said 'Yes,' and handed him my card. My strange neighbour did the same. The Peeler glanced at it, shook his head meaningly, and remarked to the other man :

"'No, no, this won't do at all, sir, there is only one George R. Sims.'

"I looked instinctively at the card in the policeman's hand. **THE NAME ON IT WAS MINE.** I turned to the other man for an explanation; he gave it at once. **THE NAME ON THE CARD WAS HIS ALSO—HE, TOO, WAS GEORGE R. SIMS!**

"Now, to hear of one's duplicate being in existence sounds odd enough, but to meet him thus, side by side, inspired me with a weird, uncanny sensation, which I couldn't shake off for days."

"But how do you——?"

"Let's talk of something else. Come over here, and look at these 'works of art,' if you want to see something original."

I followed his instructions, and joined him on the other side of the table.

You never saw such an extraordinary collection of envelopes in your life. Each of them had been posted and safely delivered. I picked up one. It bore this unique address :

“ Mr. Sims Opposite,
“ The Ducks’ Pond,
“ Regions Park.”

Another had a perfect sketch of the *Referee*, containing the “ Mustard and Cress ” columns, and merely signed “ Dagonet.” A third described the back of an enormous bull-dog, wearing a collar with the author’s name and address on it. On a fourth envelope I sorted from this medley there appeared the head and shoulders of Mr. Sims being gazed at by the goggle eyes of two lean ducks.

But the simplest packet which found its destination had only one single word written on it—not London, nor England ; simply that one revered and much loved name, “ Dagonet.”

I often think that George R. Sims tries to hide a depth of feeling that few people give him credit for beneath the veneer of brilliant cynicism he so frequently assumes. Always faultlessly dressed and neatly groomed, it is easy to see that “ Dagonet ” is a bit of a “ dandy,” too.

The clock struck five. Mrs. Bullyboy must be getting that sole under weigh, so I prepared to face the dreary dampness of the outside world once more.

George R. Sims is an inveterate smoker, and in addition to various souvenirs of his magnificent dogs, a No. 2 copy of “ Living London,” which, by the way, having no beginning and no end, reminds me forcibly of a man’s indefinite love-letter, he presented me with some wonderful matches which were made expressly for his use, measuring each about half a yard in length.

Mine host, ever courteous, insisted, notwithstanding the cold in his head and catarrh on his chest, on seeing me out.

So, with sincere regrets that my visit had come to an end, we waved our mutual adieux.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BRIBERY AND TEMPTATION

“**YOU CAN RESIST EVERYTHING BUT TEMPTATION**,” as somebody remarked with airy assertiveness in one of the Wilde society comedies. But the author erred. It was really quite a ‘sleeveless’ thing to say, although the audience received this sprightly sally with a burst of presumable satisfaction, and for five minutes fully believed in its truth. But with reflection came meditation, and then, when you blew away the froth, little remained save Oscar and one of his frequently superficial Wildeisms.

Read this :

“ ——— Theatre,
“ September 189—.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Thank you again and again for all the help you have given me. It has been so good of you, and, believe me, I appreciate it more than I can tell you. Ask your dear wife to wear these flowers, and pin in the buttonhole to your coat, will you please ? And another favour : will you send me a rose for my second act ? Just one to bring me luck ; I told Mrs. Margaret that I wanted to give *you* a comfort for all the comfort and help you have given *me*, and I thought the greatest *real* comfort would be a brougham. But in case you think it would not be useful, I send you *my sincere and heartfelt thanks*. If, after all, you would rather I gave you the brougham, why, you have only to tell me, and it shall be yours. It is a little beauty.

"My love to you both. How I am going to try to please you two dear ones !

"Yours ever,
"Etc."

"*My sincere and heartfelt thanks*," were apparently suspended in a small parcel attached to this highly-edifying communication. When unrolled, we found the "consignment" consisted of ten hundred-pound notes. They were very nice and new, and they crackled with pleasant promise—but heigho ! that's as far as we got with them. *Back* they travelled at top speed to the person who had the courage to send them.

Retrospection has taught me that we must have been uncommonly idiotic people, possessing no commercial instinct whatever. Instead of receiving these persistent offerings of "*sincere and heartfelt thanks*" with delight and faces beaming with smiles, we waxed exceeding wroth, wrote indignant and extremely foolish letters of protest, and rode the high horse with curb, snaffle and a hoighty-toightiness that only a couple of simpletons like ourselves could be guilty of.

Yes, there is no denying it, we were an extraordinarily unbusiness-like pair.

Experientia docet—but unfortunately the experience arrived too late to be of any service.

There must have been a glut of broughams on the market this particular year, for so many members of the profession were eager to "feature" us in one.

The narrowest escape we had from being forced into anything like this occurred only a few days after the return of "*my S. and H. T.*," when the quiet of our neighbourhood was disturbed by the clattering hoofs of two magnificent bays that came prancing round the Square shortly before midday meal-time. Behind them rolled an extremely handsome carriage, and on the box, spotlessly got up, sat two of the smartest liveried servants you could possibly find anywhere.

The vehicle stopped outside our door, the footman jumped down, knocked, and handed in this note :

“ — Theatre,
“ September 189—.

“ DEAR MR. AND MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

“ We, that is to say, I, He and all of us, have suddenly realized that we have committed a very grave offence.

“ We, that is to say, I, He and all of us, hasten to repair our error. Will you forgive us, and as a token of your full pardon, will you take this little offering from us as a wedding gift? (We had been married over two years.)

“ You will probably excuse the acceptance of it on the grounds that it will be too expensive a luxury to ‘keep a-going,’ but we, that is to say, I, He and all of us, desire to make preparations for that, as the *completion* of our small contribution to the happiness we hope it will bring you.

“ Will you both take the first outing in *your carriage now*, and come straight away to lunch with me and a few friends at “The Romans?” A right royal welcome awaits you.

“ Don’t disappoint us. Luncheon at one-fifteen.

“ Heaps and heaps of the best to you,

“ Yours ever sincerely,
“ Etc.”

Dramatist Wilde. Your cynical assertion nearly got justified during the quarter of an hour that fascinating turn-out waited at our front door—at least, it did by me.

I will not say that Clement Scott’s soul hankered as mine did. A dangerous hansom or a smelly, stuffy, dirty, straw-lined “growler” always contented him, but my whole being yearned for those two beautiful horses, and that cute “drive-about.”

However, to hanker or yearn made no difference. The whole paraphernalia went back again, and we didn’t even join the merry luncheon party.

What a brace of fools we were!

“ Garrick Club,
“ July, 189—.

“ MY DEAR SCOTT,

“ I am perplexed, and feel sure that you, with your usual generosity, will not refuse to help me in my difficulty. I send you with this note a copy of my new play, which is, as you know, to be produced shortly at the ——. Now, I have written two endings to act three, and cannot for the life of me decide which is the more effective one. Will you consent to act as my judge, and so save me any further worry ?

“ Of course, I know how hard worked you are, and that your time is money ; therefore I do not propose that you should do my business for nothing.

“ I enclose a signed blank cheque, and leave it for you to fill in for the amount you consider reasonable in the circumstances.

“ I am, my dear Scott,

“ Yours always,
“ ETC.”

The same day that C. S. received this gracefully-worded missive, I had been invited to share a tea with Edward Lawson, so I took the document with me as a “ tag ” for the meal.

His mischievous eyes literally danced wickedness, as he casually demanded to know how much Clement intended to fill the cheque in for.

Then he told me frankly that we took everything far too seriously, that we were mugs of the first water, and stupid not to make use of our “ golden ” opportunities.

He argued with much perseverance, that in any event actors, authors and managers must tire sooner or later of “ trying it on,” and finally admitted that whether we accepted bribes, or whether we didn’t, *he* should rest perfectly happy in his own mind that they would not influence C. S.’s opinion one way or the other, and that nothing would appear in the *Daily Telegraph* but a genuinely true account, according to his one and only recognized dramatic critic, of any play ever written.

I returned home fully persuaded that we ought to grab the gifts provided for us, but whether by the devil or the Gods I had not been quite so firmly convinced.

You should have heard the other side of the story, and the views expressed by C. S. on the subject. He was horrified. He was shocked. He was disgusted. He wanted to annihilate the whole world. Nothing was true in it, everything was sham, and he vowed he'd smash the reptile who sent him that wretched cheque.

And the end? Well, the play and its "act with the double ending" turned out to be one of the author's biggest successes. Clement's unreserved opinion took up considerable space in the *Telegraph*, and the only two who had the opportunity of sharing its great benefits, and didn't, were ourselves.

An Englishman in America attempted a more than ever "prodigal" temptation, in the shape of jewels and precious stones. A rich and very prosperous actor, called to make his salaam to Clement when we lived across the ditch, and C. S. had been booked for a term by James Gordon Bennett to write for the *New York Herald*. The actor was billed to appear the following week at the Knickerbocker Theatre on Broadway.

After a short talk and a few laughs he rose to go, and as he bade me farewell he tried to slip a small box into my hand.

A most unfortunate little attention, as it happened, for I have always detested anybody doing a thing of that kind, it frightens me. More than once I have screamed out in terror when, for a practical joke, something squashy or beastly has been "palmed" on to me.

Do you remember those horrible toy toads with protruding, beady eyes which used to leap up on to you when anybody pressed the spring?

My father scared me with one of these animals by placing it in my open hand, holding it down and letting the thing jump—I may have been a very small child at the time, but I never forgot the fright it gave me.

The actor's box shared the same fate as the abominable

toad. The instant I felt it I yelled loudly, "What is it? What is it?" and dropped it to the ground.

For a moment the poor fellow stood paralysed with confusion; then bleating something about having found a souvenir he would like us to keep as a reminder of our visit to New York City, he just *faded away*.

Once more the "temptation" axiom proved inaccurate. So far as it concerned me it was harder than ever to resist, for the diamond necklet we discovered reposing in its nest of pale rose satin looked truly beautiful, and the three pearls set as studs and intended to adorn C. S.'s shirt-front were also very lovely.

Alas, they only remained in our possession for the few minutes necessary to find a messenger lad and were immediately conveyed "with thanks and regrets" to the Holland House Hotel, where the artist was staying.

"—— Theatre,

"October, 189—.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,

"A mutual friend tells me that I have selected your birthday of all the days in the year for the opening night of ——. Now, if this does not meet with your approval, and you have arranged festivities to celebrate the happy occasion, you must tell me, and I will change the date of production for one which suits you better. If, however, you prefer to let the matter remain as it is, I will wave congratulatory greetings to your box on the 6th. Meanwhile, let me show my deep appreciation of your presence in the theatre on this occasion. My partner and I beg you to purchase some useful little trifle that will remind you of the sincere and hearty friendship we both share for you and your good wife.

"Yours always, my dear Clement,

"Etc?"

The wherewithal accompanying this note, to buy the useful little trifle, promptly left us, and the authorities were informed that no alteration need be made in the plans already announced.

How exact in every detail that particular birthday is revived in my memory ? About ten o'clock in the morning, the acting manager of the theatre drove up in a hansom with a gorgeous show of deep rose-coloured malmaisons. He also carried with him a pathetic message from which we understood that Edward Lawson had decided to attend the *première*. There were only a very limited number of boxes in the house available, one had been ticked off for the Duke and Duchess of Teck, inveterate first-nighters at certain theatres, another was reserved for, I think, the Duke and Duchess of Fife, and the third for the actor-manager's wife and her friends. So, could we possibly make use of stalls instead of the usual *loge* ?

As it happened, Clement had fallen a victim to the influenza epidemic, and an uncertainty had arisen as to whether he would be allowed out at all. The *Daily Telegraph*, duly notified of his indisposition, already contemplated the possibility of an understudy and only waited to learn the doctor's orders.

I received the A.M. and told him the state of affairs, and he flew off rapidly in a wildly panicky frame of mind. In less than an hour, back he came. The play *must* be postponed until C. S. got better, but if there were the slightest chance of him being allowed out a box would be built up for him in the dress circle, side by side with the one ticketed for Edward Lawson.

Meanwhile Monsieur le Médecin had paid his visit and decided that if absolutely necessary the patient might go out. Clement immediately took advantage of the option, for he cordially detested anyone meddling with his part of the paper.

The offer to build up the box we received with grateful thanks, and its carpentering accordingly began amidst strict injunctions to make it secure from all draughts.

Punctual to a fault (we frequently sat outside in our conveyance waiting for the theatre doors to be opened), we arrived and were ushered into our newly rigged-up compartment.

What a shockingly miserable fiasco that play turned

out to be ! The first act over, in stalked Edward Lawson. His face wore an ominously glum expression, and he wanted to know " why the blazes " So-and-so had made such a hullabaloo about his " epoch-making " play ?

At the end of Act II. he popped in once more, and told us he felt absolutely fed up with the damnable thing ; but as So-and-so happened to be such a friend, Clement Scott had better not write any *critique* at all. Nothing he said could possibly be bad enough, the whole idea was an insult to the public.

A notice did appear, though, and in the very opening sentence C. S. summed up the entire play. If I quoted it here, there are still many who would recollect it, and they would also call to mind the frantic scene of booing and cat-calling which occurred at the finish of the performance.

Instead of being the richer by " some useful little trifle " we lost the polite attentions of our skipjack friend, who didn't even recognize our existence until his next new effort drew near, when his overtures were again as profuse as ever.

I wonder if he will read this short account of that fatal evening's entertainment ? I hope so.

Tired of being so often repulsed by C. S., several bigheads in the profession tried to get at him through me. This letter is from one thoroughly competent humbug. Imagine being bamboozled by such drivelling nonsense !

" Windsor Hotel,

" Glasgow.

" November 27, 189—.

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

" I could not *feel* half you said over the telephone this morning. I like to look into your eyes when you say things, they fill up such a lot of gaps in your chats, and somehow, the gaps say more than your chats—ask Clem if this is not so." (Rather a back-handed compliment.)

" So you have ' handed my bits ' to your old man, have you ? That's a nice thing. Also ' your old man has collared my bits.' That's another nice thing. I am

writing some pleasant things to your old man which he will be none the worse for hearing.

"Now, then, you 'hander of bits,' when do you want my next lump? As you evidently have a contempt for 'bits,' let it be a lump by all means, only give me a time limit, dear one—and how many words will satisfy your ladyship?

"Are there any more of your sort knocking about? Of all the 'stand and deliver' dames I ever encountered, I think you are the Queen.

"Enormous success with —, and when I return to London I want you to tell your old man to say he has never seen any actor better in the part. Will you do this for me? I suppose nothing would induce you to come up to Newcastle without your old man if he cannot get away? You need not write and tell me No. I shall not expect you. I dream of such events happening, but my dreams are never realized.

"I may as well tell *you* what the telephone boy told *me* this morning when I was waiting to speak to you: 'I canna put ye on to Mistress Scott for a wee wilie, ye must bide a wee and tak ye turn.' That was at twelve o'clock, and it set me thinking as to the queer way people have of expressing themselves.

"Bless you——

"Leaving you now, and loving you ever,

"Yours,

"Etc.

P.S.—"Would you like your 'ship to come home' when I get back to town? You have only to say the word, and it shall sail straight in to port if you want it to. There is a nice little load aboard your lugger."

That ship never did "come home"; it got submarined and sent to the bottom of the ocean with a horrible explosive in the shape of a scathing condemnation from Clement Scott of this actor's performance when he made his reappearance after an unusually lengthy provincial tour.

The next "temptation" with any "spirit" in it that I can call to mind was of a vastly different character. An

anonymous friend (?) sent it, who to this day has never been actually found out, so the would-be murderer is still unavenged.

It was nearly Christmas time, the hour of *Goodwill* and *kindly thoughts and tender wishes*, the moment when the sweetest blessings of "Tiny Tim" were being scattered in every direction upon women, men and children alike.

A suburban pantomime kept both of us out for the afternoon. It was the order then for the suburbs to produce their shows in advance of old Drury Lane, and any other London theatres, and we found a batch of pleasant greetings awaiting us when we returned.

One note, though, puzzled us strangely. Unsigned—written in type—and altogether mystifying and peculiarly worded, its presence perplexed both of us. This is what it said :

"An old Enemy sends you, with sincere good wishes for your *Health, Wealth* and *Wisdom*, a little cask of whiskey with an appropriate inscription. May the mellowness of the spirit which comes of years possess you. May those qualities which have brought you friends increase and crown each succeeding year, and may those qualities which have brought you enemies drop from you like a disused tail. The sender does not reveal himself, in the hope that you may suspect in turn each of your numerous enemies, so
'DRINK DOWN ALL UNKINDNESS! GOOD LUCK, CLEMENT!'"

My instinct scented danger at once. I felt there must be something wrong with the 'inside' of this mysteriously-delivered barrel, which had been placed by a carved oak chest in a corner of the hall and bore a handsome silver mount engraved with the repeated request to "**DRINK DOWN ALL UNKINDNESS.**"

I had the cask removed at once to a safe corner, and taking the wrapping off the silver tap, I inserted the key, turned it, and drew enough of the contents to fill a small sample bottle.

This I sent carefully packed to an analytical chemist, and did not feel surprised to receive a note in reply to mine telling me to destroy the remainder of that delightful drink as soon as possible, for even in the small quantity I had submitted for test, there was sufficient *poison* to destroy at least half a dozen people.

We always *suspected* the "generous friend" who sent that thoroughly well-doped "medicine." There could only be one man we knew in the theatrical world who hated Clement sufficiently to kill him if he had the opportunity of doing so.

Well, he had a good try, and he failed, but I have a pretty shrewd conception that he always regretted his unsuccessful attempt.

CHAPTER XXIX

LA VIE BOHÈME

“ Queen Anne’s Mansions,
“ Westminster.
“ Thursday.

“ **Y**OU naughty Clementina, not to have taken your old friend into your confidence. You must repair your ways at once. I have only heard of your dear one, and the hearing has made me very curious to know her.

“ Will you ask her whether she will be very uncere-
monious and dine here with me next Sunday to meet a
few kindred souls, or does she insist upon a formal call
from me first, as the wife of so eminent a person as yourself
has the right to demand ?

“ Whichever way she decides let me know, or perhaps
you can induce her to pen me a little line telling me if I
am admitted to her court, and when she will allow me
to come and pay her homage.

“ Most affectionately yours—and I hope hers
“ in the days to come,
“ **MRS. CHARLEY.**”

No woman in this world had a better friend than I had
in Mrs. Charles Mathews, the adored mother of Charles
Mathews, the present Director of Public Prosecutions, and
widow of the celebrated actor.

“ Mrs. Charley ” was of all gay Bohemia the most
Bohemian. Sympathetic to all, inimical to none, Mrs.
Charley’s cosy flat in Queen Anne’s Mansions is still to be



Photo by]

[W. & D. Downey.

MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT.

[Facing p. 262.

remembered for its remarkable gatherings of the most artistic set in La Vie Bohème.

Her "hen" parties were quite celebrated affairs. In addition to being extremely popular as a hostess, Mrs. Charley possessed a genuine love for peace-making, especially amongst her own sex, and I can recall two or three jagged rents in the white sail of friendship which were mended and neatly patched together by her tact and cleverness.

Nobody ever knew Mrs. Charley's age. In appearance she had the figure of a very shapely young girl of twenty, and she had a pair of remarkably trim ankles, which were the admiration of everybody.

It may have been because she had known Clement Scott for so long and had become so attached to him that she allowed me to be her devoted slave, but then everybody who knew her loved her. I never heard her speak unkindly of anyone, she saw good everywhere, and never picked out faults, but invariably extolled virtues.

Mrs. Charley collapsed very suddenly. She didn't seem to be really ill, she simply went to pieces at her son's house in Lennox Gardens, where her daughter-in-law, Lady Mathews, nursed her most devotedly.

From here I received the last little letter from her, which is pasted carefully in my autograph book. It reads :

" 5, Lennox Gardens,
" Saturday.

" MARGARET,

" Will you come here and see me on Monday afternoon ? I am not able to get out just yet, but Lucy is trying her best to put me together again, and if anyone can succeed she will. I am not allowed any visitors, but I just want to see you, ma honey, yes, I do, and Willie (Sir Charles Mathews) says I may write this little note to you, so come and tell me the news you know I long to hear about.

" Affectionate love to you and Clement,

" MRS. CHARLEY."

How angry she used to be with me when "on duty" at some of the Society functions which I so cordially detested. I received a sharp pinch under the tenderest part of my arm from her on one occasion when we were at one of these overcrowded affairs from which I wanted to fly miles away.

"For goodness' sake if you *are* bored, don't *look* it," she exclaimed, giving me a painful nip, whereupon I immediately fetched out my property smile and kept busy with it until our departure.

In the large dining-hall downstairs at Queen Anne's Mansions Mrs. Charley paid tribute to Henry Irving by entertaining him at a luncheon party the very first Sunday after he had received his knighthood.

Ellen Terry, Arthur Wing Pinero and his wife (Myra Holme as she called herself when on the stage), George Alexander and his wife, Marion Terry, Edward Lawson, Bram Stoker, Charles Mathews and his wife, Sam Heilbut, Douglas Straight, Beerbohm Tree and his wife, Clement Scott and his wife, and ever so many others grouped round her hospitable board.

Mrs. Lynn Lynton, authoress and journalist, and another tenant of Queen Anne's Mansions, was also a guest on this occasion. I recollect Mrs. Lynn Lynton's greeting to me when I went to see her :

"Well now, my dear, begin."

"Begin what?"

"Your grievances, of course. Get those over as soon as you can and then we'll have tea."

"I haven't any grievances."

"What? No cruel husband, or treacherous woman acquaintance?"

"No! Nothing of that sort at all," I answered definitely.

"Then you are doubly welcome. Come and see me as often as you can. No grievances, no complaints, what a remarkable woman!"

"Till then, *Sir Henry*," I said as we gripped hands and the luncheon party spread away in different directions.

"You dare!" he replied. "I'm Henry to you always. Knight, Baronet or Peer, please never forget it."

Yes, I honestly think it was for the profession that Henry Irving felt proud of his knighthood, and also for being the first actor to receive it. Some people have argued that Augustus Harris could have claimed priority, but Gus Harris' title was bestowed on him when he wore the robes of a Sheriff of London and had nothing at all to do with him as an actor or the stage.

So far as Irving himself was concerned he didn't care a rap for it, and I think I am right in saying that he never had "Sir" prefixed to his name on a single one of his London programmes or newspaper announcements. The "billing" merely read—"Henry Irving," *tout court*.

In the provinces it meant quite another matter, the "Sir" helped to swell the box-office receipts.

A great deal of his early success Irving owed to the charitable natured and gentle voiced Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who some say was of great financial assistance to him at the dawn of his Lyceum reign—others say that this is not correct.

Bram Stoker, Irving's confidential manager, a big, blustering, loose-limbed Irishman, devoted heart and soul to his Chief, delighted to flaunt open cheque-books about, which most people believed the kindly Baroness had supplied. H. B. Irving, referring to the "National Biography," tells us this volume states that the Baroness interested herself socially in his father and not monetarily.

Ellen Terry states in her book of memories :

"It was said by an idle tongue in later years that rich ladies financed Henry Irving's ventures. The only shadow of foundation for this statement is that *at the beginning of his tenancy of the Lyceum, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts lent him a certain sum of money, every farthing of which was repaid during the first few months of his management.*"

However, be it one way or the other, a certain unfortunate slip on the part of the actor severed for some time a very delightful friendship.

But by the time this mishap occurred, Henry Irving

had already mounted too high up the theatrical steps of fame for it to make any material difference to his position socially. Many years went by, though, before the Baroness decided to receive Irving into favour again.

In the summer time at one of her beautiful homes, Holly Lodge, Highgate, the Baroness often made up "scratch" dinner parties from the ranks of fair Bohemia. She would send notes round by hand to her friends, and the messengers would wait for answers. Such happy inspirations generally resulted in most enjoyable evenings.

"Holly Lodge.

"June 23, '96.

"DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,

"Should you and Mr. Clement Scott be disengaged on Thursday next, the 25th, would you give us the pleasure of your company at dinner at eight o'clock ?

We are just now beginning to see our friends, for neither Mr. Burdett Coutts or myself have been in London this season, excepting for a few engagements and for business matters which we felt we were bound to attend to.

"I hope we may be fortunate enough to find you able to come.

"With kindest regards to Mr. Clement Scott,

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"BURDETT COUTTS."

There was no ceremony of any kind at such meetings as these. We generally assembled without the presence of the Baroness, who would make her appearance carrying a silver tray laden with sweet-smelling posies of old-world blooms cut from her gardens. She adored flowers, they were a special joy to her, and she would present each of us with a cluster, choosing as a rule the colours that harmonized best with those we were wearing.

After dinner we danced, we walked about the lovely grounds, and more often than not the Baroness would have long talks in the billiard-room, decorated with paintings

of her favourite dogs and horses, with Clement Scott, for she took a deep interest in the theatre, and liked to know everything about everybody.

The Baroness Burdett Coutts always expressed particular sympathy with the Actors' Orphanage Fund, which I founded in conjunction with Mrs. Charles Carson, and this great lady would arrive at the meetings without any fuss or fanfare of trumpets. Indeed, on one occasion, when George Alexander had been good enough to lend us the St. James' Theatre for our general discussion, this benevolent lady appeared on the stage, and some over-zealous "committeete," not knowing her, had almost sent her into the auditorium, when somebody just stopped the O.Z.C. in time.

Through the energy and influence of this ever humane benefactress, an end was put to one of the most hideous practices which ever existed in a civilized country. I allude to the use made of small boys who were sent by sweeps to climb up the chimneys to clean them.

These poor children suffered the most terrible tortures. Their arms and legs were skinned raw when they came down from their work, and in order to harden the baby flesh, saltpetre had to be rubbed into it, and the miserable, hungry mites were forced to stand before fires until it had dried into their torn and lacerated limbs.

What agony and suffering! Can you conceive such barbarity? And it is entirely due to the Baroness Burdett Coutts that this odious custom got stopped.

One of the chief charms about the Baroness was her melodious speaking voice, a voice full of compassion and tender humanity, one such as Shakespeare tells us that Cordelia had :

" Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman."

Added to this, the Baroness appeared to be entirely devoid of anything like "aboveness." Never over-dignified, never assuming, never dictatorial, with her *equality and the world were one.*

CHAPTER XXX

CLEMENT SCOTT'S PROPHECY

THE RELIGION OF THE DRAMA

THIS is what Clement Scott wrote in 1899 and his prophecy has been startlingly fulfilled—he said :

In 1860 I was a dramatic Radical.

In 1899 I am a dramatic Unionist.

But with this difference—I am on the defence now, and not on the attack.

I am fighting in 1899 to preserve the stage from the specious friends who are its worst enemies. I am still standing under the banner of *human nature*, but with the whole plan of campaign reversed.

“THE STAGE FOR THE PEOPLE,” has ever been my cry, and as in 1860 I fought that the stage might be *RECOVERED* for the people, so do I fight now, in 1899, that the stage may be *retained* for the people.

There is no more eloquent power for good, no finer or more splendid missionary to teach high thoughts and honourable deeds than the stage when rightly used. When wrongly used, this gracious and beautiful drama

“ Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd :
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.”

The pessimistic craze, the arrogant determination to call a spade a spade at every turn and in any circumstance,

has brought about the dramatic revolution of these last few curious years

Opposition started with Ibsen. The public voice sent Ibsen to the wall, but the trail of the Ibsen serpent has been left on the stage and our cleverest and most literary dramatists have been ensnared by it.

The more the clergy preached against the stage the more we pleaded for it as inculcating the noblest lessons, and setting the noblest of examples.

And so it has been up to the commencement of the Dramatic Revolution in 1890, when, unfortunately, it was held that every subject capable of discussion ought to be argued out in public on the English stage. Here we join issue with the "new critics," who advocate suicide and glorify the dramatization of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

On our side we have broken down the Puritanic spirit that preached against the stage as the opening to the pit of hell, and excommunicated the players as vile and unfit for Christian burial.

I absolutely deny that the subject of Ibsen's *Ghosts* is fit for any dinner-table, unless, indeed, we are so advanced that we discuss hereditary disease with our soup, and over the *entrée* enlist the conversation of a pretty woman as to the ravages derived from sensuality, and the sins of the fathers inherited by the children.

And what, I should like to know, has this much-talked-of Society done for the stage to lift it in the eyes of the people? Has the new social status of the actor and actress been advantageous or detrimental to the *ART*? Have the bestowal of honours and the exercise of backstairs influence and the jostling and tumbling over one another to squeeze into drawing-rooms and to scramble behind the scenes of a theatre to feast, to flout, to flirt, and to "*flâner*" added to, or detracted from, the artistic ideals of the theatrical profession?

But putting aside the dramatic profession, the public has also a very distinct grievance. The miserable state of the stage of the present day is mainly due to this insane snobbery. Are these "self-respecting" actors and

actresses so foolish that they cannot see the end to which all this is leading? *Those who want to be legitimately amused will take themselves off in shoals to the variety halls, where all who appear there are hard-working, earnest in their study, and try their very utmost to do their best for their employers and the vast audiences which believe in them.*

You don't get any "scamped" work in a music hall.

Unless drastic measures are taken at once, *the theatre will assuredly be as empty in the future as the variety houses will be crowded.*

This was the Clement Scott prophecy in 1899.

In 1918, after over four years of savage and frightful war, and within a few hours of the Armistice being signed, the King and Queen of England elected to visit the Alhambra Variety Theatre, to laugh over Oswald Stoll's production of the *Bing Boys on Broadway*, with two of our most popular music hall stars in the leading characters, *i.e.*, George Robey and Violet Loraine.

The Royal guests desired to be genuinely amused and to enjoy a good evening's entertainment.

Clement Scott's significant "writing on the wall" could not have been more strangely and completely realized.

L'ENVOI

AND now my hardest task has come. It is difficult to bid farewell to scenes so unutterably dear, and to close the doors for ever on a chapel so garlanded with tender thoughts and happy romance.

Some of the pictures are, to me, so delightful to gaze upon in that wonderful home of treasures that I feel sure I shall not be able to resist the temptation of stealing back again to take another peep every now and again.

Will the meditations which my heart prompts me to speak aloud be welcome? I wonder.

There is so very much more that I would like to say, much more than is contained in this humble contribution, but already I'm told that I have written more than enough for one book.

There are so many more amusing tales I want to tell you of people we know; and there is one story in particular which I am sure you will all expect to hear from me.

I mean the true circumstances in which Clement Scott severed his connection with the *Daily Telegraph*—the tragic end of an earnest, honourable, and hard-working journalist who reaped little or nothing but condemnation for his years of faithful services rendered.

It is, however, a story so full of sadness and heart-breaking memories, that I have been forced to put it aside for the moment. I hope to give it, together with other equally startling revelations in Book Two, which I am already preparing and expect to have ready by the end of the year.

I did not have a very long innings in the "Great Game of Life's Happiness"—a year or two at most, that's all. But during the few months I have been recalling the facts contained in this volume, remembering the faces of beloved friends, and repainting impressions of hours never to be forgotten, I have relived every second of that "bittersweet" time.

And now—there is nothing left—nothing but a woman and her memories :

" There may be some who know distress,
Some friend who's supped with Sorrow.
Remember, then, in kindness,
For them—*there's no to-morrow.*"

THE END

